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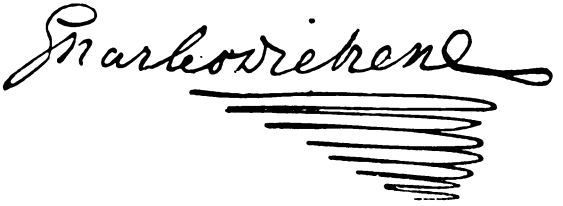

EDITION.

The appointed time

BLEAK HOUSE.

BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

WITH EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS.

LONDON:
CHAPMAN AND HALL, 193, PICCADILLY.
1868.

21445.17.20

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PREFACE.

:HANCERY Judge once had the kindness to inform me, as one of mpany of some hundred and fifty men and women not labouring :r any suspicions of lunacy, that the Court of Chancery, though shining subject of much popular prejudice (at which point I ght the Judge's eye had a cast in my direction), was almost ıaculate. There had been, he admitted, a trivial blemish or so s rate of progress, but this was exaggerated, and had been entirely ıg to the "parsimony of the public;" which guilty public, it ared, had been until lately bent in the most determined manner ɔy no means enlarging the number of Chancery Judges appointed believe by Richard the Second, but any other King will do ell.

his seemed to me too profound a joke to be inserted in the body his book, or I should have restored it to Conversation Kenge or g. Vholes, with one or other of whom I think it must have ted. In such mouths I might have coupled it with an apt ation from one of SHAKSPEARE'S Sonnets:

> My nature is subdued
> To what it works in, like the dyer's hand:
> Pity me then, and wish I were renew'd!

ut as it is wholesome that the parsimonious public should know t has been doing, and *still is doing*, in this connexion, I mention

here that everything set forth in these pages concerning the Court of Chancery is substantially true, and within the truth. The case of Gridley is in no essential altered from one of actual occurrence, made public by a disinterested person who was professionally acquainted with the whole of the monstrous wrong from beginning to end. At the present moment * there is a suit before the Court which was commenced nearly twenty years ago; in which from thirty to forty counsel have been known to appear at one time; in which costs have been incurred to the amount of seventy thousand pounds; which is *a friendly suit;* and which is (I am assured) no nearer to its termination now than when it was begun. There is another well-known suit in Chancery, not yet decided, which was commenced before the close of the last century, and in which more than double the amount of seventy thousand pounds has been swallowed up in costs. If I wanted other authorities for JARNDYCE AND JARNDYCE, I could rain them on these pages, to the shame of—a parsimonious public.

There is only one other point on which I offer a word of remark. The possibility of what is called Spontaneous Combustion has been denied since the death of Mr. Krook; and my good friend MR. LEWES (quite mistaken, as he soon found, in supposing the thing to have been abandoned by all authorities) published some ingenious letters to me at the time when that event was chronicled, arguing that Spontaneous Combustion could not possibly be. I have no need to observe that I do not wilfully or negligently mislead my readers, and that before I wrote that description I took pains to investigate the subject. There are about thirty cases on record, of which the most famous, that of the Countess Cornelia de Bandi Cesenate, was minutely investigated and described by Giuseppe Bianchini, a prebendary of Verona, otherwise distinguished in letters, who published an account of it at Verona, in 1731, which he afterwards republished at Rome. The appearances beyond all rational doubt observed

* In August, 1853.

in that case, are the appearances observed in Mr. Krook's case. The next most famous instance happened at Rheims, six years earlier; and the historian in that case is Le Cat, one of the most renowned surgeons produced by France. The subject was a woman, whose husband was ignorantly convicted of having murdered her; but, on solemn appeal to a higher court, he was acquitted, because it was shown upon the evidence that she had died the death to which this name of Spontaneous Combustion is given. I do not think it necessary to add to these notable facts, and that general reference to the authorities which will be found at page 27, vol. ii.,* the recorded opinions and experiences of distinguished medical professors, French, English, and Scotch, in more modern days; contenting myself with observing, that I shall not abandon the facts until there shall have been a considerable Spontaneous Combustion of the testimony on which human occurrences are usually received.

In Bleak House, I have purposely dwelt upon the romantic side of familiar things.

* Another case, very clearly described by a dentist, occurred at the town of Columbus, in the United States of America, quite recently. The subject was a German, who kept a liquor-shop, and was an inveterate drunkard.

BLEAK HOUSE.

CHAPTER I.

IN CHANCERY.

NDON. Michaelmas Term lately over, and the Lord Chancellor sitting in ...lin's Inn Hall. Implacable November weather. As much mud in the ...ets, as if the waters had but newly retired from the face of the earth, and it ...uld not be wonderful to meet a Megalosaurus, forty feet long or so, waddling ... an elephantine lizard up Holborn Hill. Smoke lowering down from chimney-...s, making a soft black drizzle, with flakes of soot in it as big as full-grown ...w-flakes—gone into mourning, one might imagine, for the death of the sun. ...gs, undistinguishable in mire. Horses, scarcely better; splashed to their very ...kers. Foot passengers, jostling one another's umbrellas, in a general infec-...n of ill-temper, and losing their foot-hold at street-corners, where tens of ...usands of other foot passengers have been slipping and sliding since the day ...ke (if this day ever broke), adding new deposits to the crust upon crust of mud, ...cking at those points tenaciously to the pavement, and accumulating at com-...und interest.

Fog everywhere. Fog up the river, where it flows among green aits and mea-...ws; fog down the river, where it rolls defiled among the tiers of shipping, and ... waterside pollutions of a great (and dirty) city. Fog on the Essex marshes, ... on the Kentish heights. Fog creeping into the cabooses of collier-brigs; fog ...ng out on the yards, and hovering in the rigging of great ships; fog drooping ... the gunwales of barges and small boats. Fog in the eyes and throats of ...cient Greenwich pensioners, wheezing by the firesides of their wards; fog in ... stem and bowl of the afternoon pipe of the wrathful skipper, down in his close ...bin; fog cruelly pinching the toes and fingers of his shivering little 'prentice ...y on deck. Chance people on the bridges peeping over the parapets into a ...ther sky of fog, with fog all round them, as if they were up in a balloon, and ...nging in the misty clouds.

Gas looming through the fog in divers places in the streets, much as the sun ...y, from the spongey fields, be seen to loom by husbandman and ploughboy. ...ost of the shops lighted two hours before their time—as the gas seems to know, ... it has a haggard and unwilling look.

The raw afternoon is rawest, and the dense fog is densest, and the muddy ...eets are muddiest, near that leaden-headed old obstruction, appropriate orna-...ent for the threshold of a leaden-*headed old* corporation: Temple Bar. And

hard by Temple Bar, in Lincoln's Inn Hall, at the very heart of the fog, sits the Lord High Chancellor in his High Court of Chancery.

Never can there come fog too thick, never can there come mud and mire too deep, to assort with the groping and floundering condition which this High Court of Chancery, most pestilent of hoary sinners, holds, this day, in the sight of heaven and earth.

On such an afternoon, if ever, the Lord High Chancellor ought to be sitting here—as here he is—with a foggy glory round his head, softly fenced in with crimson cloth and curtains, addressed by a large advocate with great whiskers, a little voice, and an interminable brief, and outwardly directing his contemplation to the lantern in the roof, where he can see nothing but fog. On such an afternoon, some score of members of the High Court of Chancery bar ought to be—as here they are—mistily engaged in one of the ten thousand stages of an endless cause, tripping one another up on slippery precedents, groping knee-deep in technicalities, running their goat-hair and horse-hair warded heads against walls of words, and making a pretence of equity with serious faces, as players might. On such an afternoon, the various solicitors in the cause, some two or three of whom have inherited it from their fathers, who made a fortune by it, ought to be—as are they not?—ranged in a line, in a long matted well (but you might look in vain for Truth at the bottom of it), between the registrar's red table and the silk gowns, with bills, cross-bills, answers, rejoinders, injunctions, affidavits, issues, references to masters, masters' reports, mountains of costly nonsense, piled before them. Well may the court be dim, with wasting candles here and there; well may the fog hang heavy in it, as if it would never get out; well may the stained glass windows lose their colour, and admit no light of day into the place; well may the uninitiated from the streets, who peep in through the glass panes in the door, be deterred from entrance by its owlish aspect, and by the drawl languidly echoing to the roof from the padded dais where the Lord High Chancellor looks into the lantern that has no light in it, and where the attendant wigs are all stuck in a fog-bank! This is the Court of Chancery; which has its decaying houses and its blighted lands in every shire; which has its worn-out lunatic in every madhouse, and its dead in every churchyard; which has its ruined suitor, with his slipshod heels and threadbare dress, borrowing and begging through the round of every man's acquaintance; which gives to monied might, the means abundantly of wearying out the right; which so exhausts finances, patience, courage, hope; so overthrows the brain and breaks the heart; that there is not an honourable man among its practitioners who would not give—who does not often give—the warning, "Suffer any wrong that can be done you, rather than come here!"

Who happen to be in the Lord Chancellor's court this murky afternoon besides the Lord Chancellor, the counsel in the cause, two or three counsel who are never in any cause, and the well of solicitors before mentioned? There is the registrar below the Judge, in wig and gown; and there are two or three maces, or petty bags, or privy purses, or whatever they may be, in legal court suits. These are all yawning; for no crumb of amusement ever falls from JARNDYCE AND JARNDYCE (the cause in hand), which was squeezed dry years upon years ago. The short-hand writers, the reporters of the court, and the reporters of the newspapers invariably decamp with the rest of the regulars when Jarndyce and Jarndyce comes on. Their places are a blank. Standing on a seat at the side of the hall the better to peer into the curtained sanctuary, is a little mad old woman in a squeezed bonnet, who is always in court, from its sitting to its rising, and always expecting some incomprehensible judgment to be given in her favour. Some say she really is, or was, a party to a suit; but no one knows for certain, because no one cares. She carries some small litter in a reticule which she calls her docu

ments; principally consisting of paper matches and dry lavender. A sallow prisoner has come up, in custody, for the half-dozenth time, to make a personal application "to purge himself of his contempt;" which, being a solitary surviving executor who has fallen into a state of conglomeration about accounts of which it is not pretended that he had ever any knowledge, he is not at all likely ever to do. In the meantime his prospects in life are ended. Another ruined suitor, who periodically appears from Shropshire, and breaks out into efforts to address the Chancellor at the close of the day's business, and who can by no means be made to understand that the Chancellor is legally ignorant of his existence after making it desolate for a quarter of a century, plants himself in a good place and keeps an eye on the Judge, ready to call out "My Lord!" in a voice of sonorous complaint, on the instant of his rising. A few lawyers' clerks and others who know this suitor by sight, linger, on the chance of his furnishing some fun, and enlivening the dismal weather a little.

Jarndyce and Jarndyce drones on. This scarecrow of a suit has, in course of time, become so complicated, that no man alive knows what it means. The parties to it understand it least; but it has been observed that no two Chancery lawyers can talk about it for five minutes, without coming to a total disagreement as to all the premises. Innumerable children have been born into the cause; innumerable young people have married into it; innumerable old people have died out of it. Scores of persons have deliriously found themselves made parties in Jarndyce and Jarndyce, without knowing how or why; whole families have inherited legendary hatreds with the suit. The little plaintiff or defendant, who was promised a new rocking-horse when Jarndyce and Jarndyce should be settled, has grown up, possessed himself of a real horse, and trotted away into the other world. Fair wards of court have faded into mothers and grandmothers; a long procession of Chancellors has come in and gone out; the legion of bills in the suit have been transformed into mere bills of mortality; there are not three Jarndyces left upon the earth perhaps, since old Tom Jarndyce in despair blew his brains out at a coffee-house in Chancery Lane; but Jarndyce and Jarndyce still drags its dreary length before the Court, perennially hopeless.

Jarndyce and Jarndyce has passed into a joke. That is the only good that has ever come of it. It has been death to many, but it is a joke in the profession. Every master in Chancery has had a reference out of it. Every Chancellor was "in it," for somebody or other, when he was counsel at the bar. Good things have been said about it by blue-nosed, bulbous-shoed old benchers, in select port-wine committee after dinner in hall. Articled clerks have been in the habit of fleshing their legal wit upon it. The last Lord Chancellor handled it neatly, when, correcting Mr. Blowers the eminent silk gown who said that such a thing might happen when the sky rained potatoes, he observed, "or when we get through Jarndyce and Jarndyce, Mr. Blowers;"—a pleasantry that particularly tickled the maces, bags, and purses.

How many people out of the suit, Jarndyce and Jarndyce has stretched forth its unwholesome hand to spoil and corrupt, would be a very wide question. From the master, upon whose impaling files reams of dusty warrants in Jarndyce and Jarndyce have grimly writhed into many shapes; down to the copying-clerk in the Six Clerks' Office, who has copied his tens of thousands of Chancery-folio-pages under that eternal heading; no man's nature has been made better by it. In trickery, evasion, procrastination, spoliation, botheration, under false pretences of all sorts, there are influences that can never come to good. The very solicitors' boys who have kept the wretched suitors at bay, by protesting time out of mind that Mr. Chizzle, Mizzle, or otherwise, was particularly engaged and had appointments until dinner, may have got an extra moral twist and shuffle into themselves.

out of Jarndyce and Jarndyce. The receiver in the cause has acquired a goodly sum of money by it, but has acquired too a distrust of his own mother, and a contempt for his own kind. Chizzle, Mizzle, and otherwise, have lapsed into a habit of vaguely promising themselves that they will look into that outstanding little matter, and see what can be done for Drizzle—who was not well used—when Jarndyce and Jarndyce shall be got out of the office. Shirking and sharking, in all their many varieties, have been sown broadcast by the ill-fated cause; and even those who have contemplated its history from the outermost circle of such evil, have been insensibly tempted into a loose way of letting bad things alone to take their own bad course, and a loose belief that if the world go wrong, it was, in some off-hand manner, never meant to go right.

Thus, in the midst of the mud and at the heart of the fog, sits the Lord High Chancellor in his High Court of Chancery.

"Mr. Tangle," says the Lord High Chancellor, latterly something restless under the eloquence of that learned gentleman.

"Mlud," says Mr. Tangle. Mr. Tangle knows more of Jarndyce and Jarndyce than anybody. He is famous for it—supposed never to have read anything else since he left school.

"Have you nearly concluded your argument?"

"Mlud, no—variety of points—feel it my duty tsubmit—ludship," is the reply that slides out of Mr. Tangle.

"Several members of the bar are still to be heard, I believe?" says the Chancellor, with a slight smile.

Eighteen of Mr. Tangle's learned friends, each armed with a little summary of eighteen hundred sheets, bob up like eighteen hammers in a pianoforte, make eighteen bows, and drop into their eighteen places of obscurity.

"We will proceed with the hearing on Wednesday fortnight," says the Chancellor. For, the question at issue is only a question of costs, a mere bud on the forest tree of the parent suit, and really will come to a settlement one of these days.

The Chancellor rises; the bar rises; the prisoner is brought forward in a hurry; the man from Shropshire cries, "My lord!" Maces, bags, and purses, indignantly proclaim silence, and frown at the man from Shropshire.

"In reference," proceeds the Chancellor, still on Jarndyce and Jarndyce, "to the young girl ——"

"Begludship's pardon—boy," says Mr. Tangle, prematurely.

"In reference," proceeds the Chancellor, with extra distinctness, "to the young girl and boy, the two young people,"

(Mr. Tangle crushed.)

"Whom I directed to be in attendance to-day, and who are now in my private room, I will see them and satisfy myself as to the expediency of making the order for their residing with their uncle."

Mr. Tangle on his legs again.

"Begludship's pardon—dead."

"With their," Chancellor looking through his double eye-glass at the papers on his desk, "grandfather."

"Begludship's pardon—victim of rash action—brains."

Suddenly a very little counsel, with a terrific bass voice, arises, fully inflated, in the back settlements of the fog, and says, "Will your lordship allow me? I appear for him. He is a cousin, several times removed. I am not at the moment prepared to inform the Court in what exact remove he is a cousin; but he *is* a cousin."

Leaving this address (delivered like a sepulchral message) ringing in the rafters

roof, the very little counsel drops, and the fog knows him no more. Every-
ooks for him. Nobody can see him.
will speak with both the young people," says the Chancellor anew, "and
myself on the subject of their residing with their cousin. I will mention
tter to-morrow morning when I take my seat."
Chancellor is about to bow to the bar, when the prisoner is presented.
g can possibly come of the prisoner's conglomeration, but his being sent
o prison; which is soon done. The man from Shropshire ventures another
strative "My lord!" but the Chancellor, being aware of him, has dexter-
anished. Everybody else quickly vanishes too. A battery of blue bags is
with heavy charges of papers and carried off by clerks; the little mad old
marches off with her documents; the empty court is locked up. If all the
ce it has committed, and all the misery it has caused, could only be locked
h it, and the whole burnt away in a great funeral pyre,—why so much the
for other parties than the parties in Jarndyce and Jarndyce!

CHAPTER II.

IN FASHION.

at a glimpse of the world of fashion that we want on this same miry afternoon
ot so unlike the Court of Chancery, but that we may pass from the one
o the other, as the crow flies. Both the world of fashion and the Court
ancery are things of precedent and usage; oversleeping Rip Van Winkles,
ave played at strange games through a deal of thundery weather; sleeping
es, whom the Knight will wake one day, when all the stopped spits in the
n shall begin to turn prodigiously!
not a large world. Relatively even to this world of ours, which has its
too (as your Highness shall find when you have made the tour of it, and are
to the brink of the void beyond), it is a very little speck. There is much
n it; there are many good and true people in it; it has its appointed place.
e evil of it is, that it is a world wrapped up in too much jeweller's cotton
e wool, and cannot hear the rushing of the larger worlds, and cannot see
as they circle round the sun. It is a deadened world, and its growth is
imes unhealthy for want of air.
Lady Dedlock has returned to her house in town for a few days previous to
parture for Paris, where her ladyship intends to stay some weeks; after
her movements are uncertain. The fashionable intelligence says so, for the
rt of the Parisians, and it knows all fashionable things. To know things
ise, were to be unfashionable. My Lady Dedlock has been down at what
lls, in familiar conversation, her "place" in Lincolnshire. The waters are
Lincolnshire. An arch of the bridge in the park has been sapped and
l away. The adjacent low-lying ground, for half a mile in breadth, is a
nt river, with melancholy trees for islands in it, and a surface punctured all
ll day long, with falling rain. My Lady Dedlock's "place" has been ex-
y dreary. The weather, for many a day and night, has been so wet that
es seem wet through, and the soft loppings and prunings of the woodman's
n make no crash or crackle as they fall. The deer, looking soaked, leave
ires, where they pass. The shot of a rifle loses its sharpness in the moist
d its smoke moves in a tardy little cloud towards the green rise, coppice-

topped, that makes a background for the falling rain. The view from my Lady Dedlock's own windows is alternately a lead-coloured view, and a view in Indian ink. The vases on the stone terrace in the foreground catch the rain all day; and the heavy drops fall, drip, drip, drip, upon the broad flagged pavement, called, from old time, the Ghost's Walk, all night. On Sundays, the little church in the park is mouldy; the oaken pulpit breaks out into a cold sweat; and there is a general smell and taste as of the ancient Dedlocks in their graves. My Lady Dedlock (who is childless), looking out in the early twilight from her boudoir at a keeper's lodge, and seeing the light of a fire upon the latticed panes, and smoke rising from the chimney, and a child, chased by a woman, running out into the rain to meet the shining figure of a wrapped-up man coming through the gate, has been put quite out of temper. My Lady Dedlock says she has been "bored to death."

Therefore my Lady Dedlock has come away from the place in Lincolnshire, and has left it to the rain, and the crows, and the rabbits, and the deer, and the partridges and pheasants. The pictures of the Dedlocks past and gone have seemed to vanish into the damp walls in mere lowness of spirits, as the housekeeper has passed along the old rooms, shutting up the shutters. And when they will next come forth again, the fashionable intelligence—which, like the fiend, is omniscient of the past and present, but not the future—cannot yet undertake to say.

Sir Leicester Dedlock is only a baronet, but there is no mightier baronet than he. His family is as old as the hills, and infinitely more respectable. He has a general opinion that the world might get on without hills, but would be done up without Dedlocks. He would on the whole admit Nature to be a good idea (a little low, perhaps, when not enclosed with a park-fence), but an idea dependent for its execution on your great county families. He is a gentleman of strict conscience, disdainful of all littleness and meanness, and ready, on the shortest notice, to die any death you may please to mention rather than give occasion for the least impeachment of his integrity. He is an honourable, obstinate, truthful, high-spirited, intensely prejudiced, perfectly unreasonable man.

Sir Leicester is twenty years, full measure, older than my Lady. He will never see sixty-five again, nor perhaps sixty-six, nor yet sixty-seven. He has a twist of the gout now and then, and walks a little stiffly. He is of a worthy presence, with his light grey hair and whiskers, his fine shirt-frill, his pure white waistcoat, and his blue coat with bright buttons always buttoned. He is ceremonious, stately, most polite on every occasion to my Lady, and holds her personal attractions in the highest estimation. His gallantry to my Lady, which has never changed since he courted her, is the one little touch of romantic fancy in him.

Indeed, he married her for love. A whisper still goes about, that she had not even family; howbeit, Sir Leicester had so much family that perhaps he had enough, and could dispense with any more. But she had beauty, pride, ambition, insolent resolve, and sense enough to portion out a legion of fine ladies. Wealth and station, added to these, soon floated her upward; and for years, now, my Lady Dedlock has been at the centre of the fashionable intelligence, and at the top of the fashionable tree.

How Alexander wept when he had no more worlds to conquer, everybody knows—or has some reason to know by this time, the matter having been rather frequently mentioned. My Lady Dedlock, having conquered *her* world, fell, not into the melting, but rather into the freezing mood. An exhausted composure, a worn-out placidity, an equanimity of fatigue not to be ruffled by interest or satisfaction, are the trophies of her victory. She is perfectly well-bred. If she could be translated to Heaven to-morrow, she might be expected to ascend without any *rapture.*

has beauty still, and, if it be not in its heyday, it is not yet in its autumn. as a fine face—originally of a character that would be rather called very than handsome, but improved into classicality by the acquired expression fashionable state. Her figure is elegant, and has the effect of being tall. at she is so, but that "the most is made," as the Honourable Bob Stables quently asserted upon oath, "of all her points." The same authority ob- that she is perfectly got up; and remarks, in commendation of her hair lly, that she is the best-groomed woman in the whole stud.

h all her perfections on her head, my Lady Dedlock has come up from her n Lincolnshire (hotly pursued by the fashionable intelligence), to pass a few t her house in town previous to her departure for Paris, where her ladyship to stay some weeks, after which her movements are uncertain. And at use in town, upon this muddy, murky afternoon, presents himself an old- ed old gentleman, attorney-at-law, and eke solicitor of the High Court of ery, who has the honour of acting as legal adviser of the Dedlocks, and has ny cast-iron boxes in his office with that name outside, as if the present t were the coin of the conjuror's trick, and were constantly being juggled h the whole set. Across the hall, and up the stairs, and along the passages, rough the rooms, which are very brilliant in the season and very dismal out Fairy-land to visit, but a desert to live in—the old gentleman is conducted, fercury in powder, to my Lady's presence.

old gentleman is rusty to look at, but is reputed to have made good thrift aristocratic marriage settlements and aristocratic wills, and to be very rich. surrounded by a mysterious halo of family confidences; of which he is to be the silent depository. There are noble Mausoleums rooted for es in retired glades of parks, among the growing timber and the fern, which s hold fewer noble secrets than walk abroad among men, shut up in the of Mr. Tulkinghorn. He is of what is called the old school—a phrase ily meaning any school that seems never to have been young—and wears reeches tied with ribbons, and gaiters or stockings. One peculiarity of his clothes, and of his black stockings, be they silk or worsted, is, that they shine. Mute, close, irresponsive to any glancing light, his dress is like f. He never converses, when not professionally consulted. He is found mes, speechless but quite at home, at corners of dinner-tables in great y houses, and near doors of drawing-rooms, concerning which the fashionable genee is eloquent: where everybody knows him, and where half the Peerage to say "How do you do, Mr. Tulkinghorn?" he receives these salutations ravity, and buries them along with the rest of his knowledge.

Lecester Dedlock is with my Lady, and is happy to see Mr. Tulkinghorn. is an air of prescription about him which is always agreeable to Sir der: he receives it as a kind of tribute. He likes Mr. Tulkinghorn's dress; s a kind of tribute in that too. It is eminently respectable, and likewise, in eral way, retainer-like. It expresses, as it were, the steward of the legal ies, the butler of the legal cellar, of the Dedlocks.

Mr. Tulkinghorn any idea of this himself? It may be so, or it may not; ere is this remarkable circumstance to be noted in everything associated with dy Dedlock as one of a class—as one of the leaders and representatives of tle world. She supposes herself to be an inscrutable Being, quite out of the and ken of ordinary mortals—seeing herself in her glass, where indeed she so. Yet, every dim little star revolving about her, from her maid to the ger of the Italian Opera, knows her weaknesses, prejudices, follies, haughti- , and caprices; and lives upon as accurate a calculation and as nice a *e of her moral nature, as her dressmaker* takes of her physical proportions.

Is a new dress, a new custom, a new singer, a new dancer, a new form of jewellery, a new dwarf or giant, a new chapel, a new anything, to be set up? There are deferential people, in a dozen callings, whom my Lady Dedlock suspects of nothing but prostration before her, who can tell you how to manage her as if she were a baby; who do nothing but nurse her all their lives; who, humbly affecting to follow with profound subservience, lead her and her whole troop after them; who, in hooking one, hook all and bear them off, as Lemuel Gulliver bore away the stately fleet of the majestic Lilliput. "If you want to address our people, sir," say Blaze and Sparkle the jewellers—meaning by our people, Lady Dedlock and the rest—"you must remember that you are not dealing with the general public; you must hit our people in their weakest place, and their weakest place is such a place." "To make this article go down, gentlemen," say Sheen and Gloss the mercers, to their friends the manufacturers, "you must come to us, because we know where to have the fashionable people, and we can make it fashionable." "If you want to get this print upon the tables of my high connexion, sir," says Mr. Sladdery the librarian, "or if you want to get this dwarf or giant into the houses of my high connexion, sir, or if you want to secure to this entertainment, the patronage of my high connexion, sir, you must leave it, if you please, to me; for I have been accustomed to study the leaders of my high connexion, sir; and I may tell you, without vanity, that I can turn them round my finger,"—in which Mr. Sladdery, who is an honest man, does not exaggerate at all.

Therefore, while Mr. Tulkinghorn may not know what is passing in the Dedlock mind at present, it is very possible that he may.

"My Lady's cause has been again before the Chancellor, has it, Mr. Tulkinghorn?" says Sir Leicester, giving him his hand.

"Yes. It has been on again to-day." Mr. Tulkinghorn replies; making one of his quiet bows to my Lady who is on a sofa near the fire, shading her face with a hand-screen.

"It would be useless to ask," says my Lady, with the dreariness of the place in Lincolnshire still upon her, "whether anything has been done."

"Nothing that *you* would call anything, has been done to-day," replies Mr. Tulkinghorn.

"Nor ever will be," says my Lady.

Sir Leicester has no objection to an interminable Chancery suit. It is a slow, expensive, British, constitutional kind of thing. To be sure, he has not a vital interest in the suit in question, her part in which was the only property my Lady brought him; and he has a shadowy impression that for his name—the name of Dedlock—to be in a cause, and not in the title of that cause, is a most ridiculous accident. But he regards the Court of Chancery, even if it should involve an occasional delay of justice and a trifling amount of confusion, as a something, devised in conjunction with a variety of other somethings, by the perfection of human wisdom, for the eternal settlement (humanly speaking) of everything. And he is upon the whole of a fixed opinion, that to give the sanction of his countenance to any complaints respecting it, would be to encourage some person in the lower classes to rise up somewhere—like Wat Tyler.

"As a few fresh affidavits have been put upon the file," says Mr. Tulkinghorn, "and as they are short, and as I proceed upon the troublesome principle of begging leave to possess my clients with any new proceedings in a cause;" cautious man Mr. Tulkinghorn, taking no more responsibility than necessary; "and further, as I see you are going to Paris; I have brought them in my pocket."

(Sir Leicester was going to Paris too, by-the-bye, but the delight of the fashionable intelligence was in his Lady.)

ulkinghorn takes out his papers, asks permission to place them on a alisman of a table at my Lady's elbow, puts on his spectacles, and begins by the light of a shaded lamp.

Chancery. Between John Jarndyce———'"

ady interrupts, requesting him to miss as many of the formal horrors n.

ulkinghorn glances over his spectacles, and begins again lower down. y carelessly and scornfully abstracts her attention. Sir Leicester in a air looks at the fire, and appears to have a stately liking for the legal ns and prolixities, as ranging among the national bulwarks. It happens fire is hot, where my Lady sits; and that the hand-screen is more l than useful, being priceless but small. My Lady, changing her , sees the papers on the table—looks at them nearer—looks at them nearer ks impulsively:

o copied that?"

ulkinghorn stops short, surprised by my Lady's animation and her unusual

t what you people call law-hand?" she asks, looking full at him in her way again, and toying with her screen.

quite. Probably"—Mr. Tulkinghorn examines it as he speaks—"the aracter which it has, was acquired after the original hand was formed. you ask?"

ything to vary this detestable monotony. O, go on, do!"

ulkinghorn reads again. The heat is greater, my Lady screens her face. ester doses, starts up suddenly, and cries "Eh? what do you say?"

y I am afraid," says Mr. Tulkinghorn, who had risen hastily, "that Lady is ill."

nt," my Lady murmurs, with white lips, "only that; but it is like the s of death. Don't speak to me. Ring, and take me to my room!"

Tulkinghorn retires into another chamber; bells ring, feet shuffle and ilence ensues. Mercury at last begs Mr. Tulkinghorn to return.

ter now," quoth Sir Leicester, motioning the lawyer to sit down and read lone. "I have been quite alarmed. I never knew my Lady swoon before. weather is extremely trying—and she really has been bored to death down lace in Lincolnshire."

CHAPTER III.

A PROGRESS.

a great deal of difficulty in beginning to write my portion of these pages, ow I am not clever. I always knew that. I can remember, when I was a le girl indeed, I used to say to my doll, when we were alone together, Dolly, I am not clever, you know very well, and you must be patient with a dear!" And so she used to sit propped up in a great arm-chair, with utiful complexion and rosy lips, staring at me—or not so much at me, I at nothing—while I busily stitched away, and told her every one of my

ear old doll! I was such a shy little thing that I seldom dared to open and never *dared to open my heart*, to anybody else. It almost makes me

cry to think what a relief it used to be to me, when I came home from school day, to run up-stairs to my room, and say, "O you dear faithful Dolly, I l you would be expecting me!" and then to sit down on the floor, leaning o elbow of her great chair, and tell her all I had noticed since we parted. I always rather a noticing way—not a quick way, O no!—a silent way of not what passed before me, and thinking I should like to understand it better. I not by any means a quick understanding. When I love a person very ten indeed, it seems to brighten. But even that may be my vanity.

I was brought up, from my earliest remembrance—like some of the princ in the fairy stories, only I was not charming—by my godmother. At least I knew her as such. She was a good, good woman! She went to church t times every Sunday, and to morning prayers on Wednesdays and Fridays, an lectures whenever there were lectures; and never missed. She was handsc and if she had ever smiled, would have been (I used to think) like an angel- she never smiled. She was always grave, and strict. She was so very good self, I thought, that the badness of other people made her frown all her lif felt so different from her, even making every allowance for the differences bet a child and a woman; I felt so poor, so trifling, and so far off; that I never c be unrestrained with her—no, could never even love her as I wished. It mad very sorry to consider how good she was, and how unworthy of her I was; a used ardently to hope that I might have a better heart; and I talked it over often with the dear old doll; but I never loved my godmother as I ought to loved her, and as I felt I must have loved her if I had been a better girl.

This made me, I dare say, more timid and retiring than I naturally was, cast me upon Dolly as the only friend with whom I felt at ease. But somet happened when I was still quite a little thing, that helped it very much.

I had never heard my mama spoken of. I had never heard of my papa ei but I felt more interested about my mama. I had never worn a black frock, I could recollect. I had never been shown my mama's grave. I had never told where it was. Yet I had never been taught to pray for any relation bu godmother. I had more than once approached this subject of my thoughts Mrs. Rachael, our only servant, who took my light away when I was in (another very good woman, but austere to me), and she had only said, "Es good night!" and gone away and left me.

Although there were seven girls at the neighbouring school where I was a boarder, and although they called me little Esther Summerson, I knew no them at home. All of them were older than I, to be sure (I was the you there by a good deal), but there seemed to be some other separation betwe besides that, and besides their being far more clever than I was, and kno much more than I did. One of them, in the first week of my going to the sc (I remember it very well), invited me home to a little party, to my great joy. my godmother wrote a stiff letter declining for me, and I never went. I r went out at all.

It was my birthday. There were holidays at school on other birthdays— on mine. There were rejoicings at home on other birthdays, as I knew from I heard the girls relate to one another—there were none on mine. My birt was the most melancholy day at home, in the whole year.

I have mentioned, that, unless my vanity should deceive me (as I know it for I may be very vain, without suspecting it—though indeed I don't), my con hension is quickened when my affection is. My disposition is very affectio and perhaps I might still feel such a wound, if such a wound could be rec more than once, with the quickness of that birthday.

Dinner was over, and my godmother and I were sitting at the table befor

fire. The clock ticked, the fire clicked; not another sound had been heard in the room, or in the house, for I don't know how long. I happened to look timidly up from my stitching, across the table, at my godmother, and I saw in her face, looking gloomily at me, "It would have been far better, little Esther, that you had had no birthday; that you had never been born!"

I broke out crying and sobbing, and I said "O, dear godmother, tell me, pray do tell me, did mama die on my birthday?"

"No," she returned. "Ask me no more, child!"

"O, do pray tell me something of her. Do now, at last, dear godmother, if you please! What did I do to her? How did I lose her? Why am I so different from other children, and why is it my fault, dear godmother? No, no, no, don't go away. O, speak to me!"

I was in a kind of fright beyond my grief; and I caught hold of her dress, and was kneeling to her. She had been saying all the while, "Let me go!" But now she stood still.

Her darkened face had such power over me, that it stopped me in the midst of my vehemence. I put up my trembling little hand to clasp hers, or to beg her pardon with what earnestness I might, but withdrew it as she looked at me, and laid it on my fluttering heart. She raised me, sat in her chair, and standing me before her, said, slowly, in a cold, low voice—I see her knitted brow, and pointed finger:

"Your mother, Esther, is your disgrace, and you were hers. The time will come—and soon enough—when you will understand this better, and will feel it too, as no one save a woman can. I have forgiven her;" but her face did not relent; "the wrong she did to me, and I say no more of it, though it was greater than you will ever know—than any one will ever know, but I, the sufferer. For yourself, unfortunate girl, orphaned and degraded from the first of these evil anniversaries, pray daily that the sins of others be not visited upon your head, according to what is written. Forget your mother and leave all other people to forget her who will do her unhappy child that greatest kindness. Now, go!"

She checked me, however, as I was about to depart from her—so frozen as I was!—and added this:

"Submission, self-denial, diligent work, are the preparations for a life begun with such a shadow on it. You are different from other children, Esther, because you were not born, like them, in common sinfulness and wrath. You are set apart."

I went up to my room, and crept to bed, and laid my doll's cheek against mine wet with tears; and holding that solitary friend upon my bosom, cried myself to sleep. Imperfect as my understanding of my sorrow was, I knew that I had brought no joy, at any time, to anybody's heart, and that I was to no one upon earth what Dolly was to me.

Dear, dear, to think how much time we passed alone together afterwards, and how often I repeated to the doll the story of my birthday, and confided to her that I would try, as hard as ever I could, to repair the fault I had been born with (of which I confessedly felt guilty and yet innocent), and would strive as I grew up to be industrious, contented, and kind-hearted, and to do some good to some one, and win some love to myself if I could. I hope it is not self-indulgent to shed these tears as I think of it. I am very thankful, I am very cheerful, but I cannot quite help their coming to my eyes.

There! I have wiped them away now, and can go on again properly.

I felt the distance between my godmother and myself so much more after the birthday, and felt so sensible of filling a place in her house which ought to have been empty, that I found her more difficult of approach, though I was fervently

grateful to her in my heart, than ever. I felt in the same way towards my school companions; I felt in the same way towards Mrs. Rachael, who was a widow; and O, towards her daughter, of whom she was proud, who came to see her once a fortnight! I was very retired and quiet, and tried to be very diligent.

One sunny afternoon, when I had come home from school with my books and portfolio, watching my long shadow at my side, and as I was gliding upstairs to my room as usual, my godmother looked out of the parlour-door, and called me back. Sitting with her, I found—which was very unusual indeed—a stranger. A portly important-looking gentleman, dressed all in black, with a white cravat, large gold watch seals, a pair of gold eye-glasses, and a large sealring upon his little finger.

"This," said my godmother in an under-tone, "is the child." Then she said, in her naturally stern way of speaking, "This is Esther, sir."

The gentleman put up his eye-glasses to look at me, and said, "Come here, my dear!" He shook hands with me, and asked me to take off my bonnet—looking at me all the while. When I had complied, he said, "Ah!" and afterwards "Yes!" And then, taking off his eye-glasses, and folding them in a red case, and leaning back in his arm-chair, turning the case about in his two hands he gave my godmother a nod. Upon that, my godmother said, "You may go up-stairs, Esther!" and I made him my curtsey and left him.

It must have been two years afterwards, and I was almost fourteen, when one dreadful night my godmother and I sat at the fireside. I was reading aloud, and she was listening. I had come down at nine o'clock, as I always did, to read the Bible to her; and was reading, from St. John, how our Saviour stooped down, writing with his finger in the dust, when they brought the sinful woman to him.

"'So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her!'"

I was stopped by my godmother's rising, putting her hand to her head, and crying out, in an awful voice, from quite another part of the book:

"'Watch ye therefore! lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch!'"

In an instant, while she stood before me repeating these words, she fell down on the floor. I had no need to cry out; her voice had sounded through the house, and been heard in the street.

She was laid upon her bed. For more than a week she lay there, little altered outwardly; with her old handsome resolute frown that I so well knew, carved upon her face. Many and many a time, in the day and in the night, with my head upon the pillow by her that my whispers might be plainer to her, I kissed her, thanked her, prayed for her, asked her for her blessing and forgiveness, entreated her to give me the least sign that she knew or heard me. No, no, no. Her face was immoveable. To the very last, and even afterwards, her frown remained unsoftened.

On the day after my poor good godmother was buried, the gentleman in black with the white neckcloth reappeared. I was sent for by Mrs. Rachael, and found him in the same place, as if he had never gone away.

"My name is Kenge," he said; "you may remember it, my child; Kenge and Carboy, Lincoln's Inn."

I replied that I remembered to have seen him once before.

"Pray be seated—here near me. Don't distress yourself; it's of no use. Mrs. Rachael, I needn't inform you who were acquainted with the late Miss Barbary's affairs, that her means die with her; and that this young lady, now her *aunt is dead*——"

"My aunt, sir!"

"It is really of no use carrying on a deception when no object is to be gained by it," said Mr. Kenge, smoothly. "Aunt in fact, though not in law. Don't distress yourself! Don't weep! Don't tremble! Mrs. Rachael, our young friend has no doubt heard of—the—a—Jarndyce and Jarndyce."

"Never," said Mrs. Rachael.

"Is it possible," pursued Mr. Kenge, putting up his eye-glasses, "that our young friend—I *beg* you won't distress yourself!—never heard of Jarndyce and Jarndyce!"

I shook my head, wondering even what it was.

"Not of Jarndyce and Jarndyce?" said Mr. Kenge, looking over his glasses at me, and softly turning the case about and about, as if he were petting something. "Not of one of the greatest Chancery suits known? Not of Jarndyce and Jarndyce—the—a—in itself a monument of Chancery practice. In which (I would say) every difficulty, every contingency, every masterly fiction, every form of procedure known in that court, is represented over and over again? It is a cause that could not exist, out of this free and great country. I should say that the aggregate of costs in Jarndyce and Jarndyce, Mrs. Rachael:" I was afraid he addressed himself to her, because I appeared inattentive; "amounts at the present hour to from SIX-ty to SEVEN-ty THOUSAND POUNDS!" said Mr. Kenge, leaning back in his chair.

I felt very ignorant, but what could I do? I was so entirely unacquainted with the subject, that I understood nothing about it even then.

"And she really never heard of the cause!" said Mr. Kenge. "Surprising!"

"Miss Barbary, sir," returned Mrs. Rachael, "who is now among the Seraphim——"

("I hope so, I am sure," said Mr. Kenge politely.)

"—Wished Esther only to know what would be serviceable to her. And she knows, from any teaching she has had here, nothing more."

"Well!" said Mr. Kenge. "Upon the whole, very proper. Now to the point," addressing me. "Miss Barbary, your sole relation (in fact, that is; for I am bound to observe that in law you had none), being deceased, and it naturally not being to be expected that Mrs. Rachael——"

"O dear no!" said Mrs. Rachael, quickly.

"Quite so," assented Mr. Kenge;—"that Mrs. Rachael should charge herself with your maintenance and support (I beg you won't distress yourself), you are in a position to receive the renewal of an offer which I was instructed to make to Miss Barbary some two years ago, and which, though rejected then, was understood to be renewable under the lamentable circumstances that have since occurred. Now, if I avow, that I represent, in Jarndyce and Jarndyce, and otherwise, a highly humane, but at the same time singular man, shall I compromise myself by any stretch of my professional caution?" said Mr. Kenge, leaning back in his chair again, and looking calmly at us both.

He appeared to enjoy beyond everything the sound of his own voice. I couldn't wonder at that, for it was mellow and full, and gave great importance to every word he uttered. He listened to himself with obvious satisfaction, and sometimes gently beat time to his own music with his head, or rounded a sentence with his hand. I was very much impressed by him—even then, before I knew that he formed himself on the model of a great lord who was his client, and that he was generally called Conversation Kenge.

"Mr. Jarndyce," he pursued, "being aware of the—I would say, desolate—position of our young friend, offers to place her at a first-rate establishment; where her education shall be *completed*, where her comfort shall be secured, where her

reasonable wants shall be anticipated, where she shall be eminently qualified to discharge her duty in that station of life unto which it has pleased—shall I say Providence?—to call her."

My heart was filled so full, both by what he said, and by his affecting manner of saying it, that I was not able to speak, though I tried.

"Mr. Jarndyce," he went on, "makes no condition, beyond expressing his expectation, that our young friend will not at any time remove herself from the establishment in question without his knowledge and concurrence. That she will faithfully apply herself to the acquisition of those accomplishments, upon the exercise of which she will be ultimately dependent. That she will tread in the paths of virtue and honour, and—the—a——so forth."

I was still less able to speak, than before.

"Now, what does our young friend say?" proceeded Mr. Kenge. "Take time, take time! I pause for her reply. But take time!"

What the destitute subject of such an offer tried to say, I need not repeat. What she did say, I could more easily tell, if it were worth the telling. What she felt, and will feel to her dying hour, I could never relate.

This interview took place at Windsor, where I had passed (as far as I knew) my whole life. On that day week, amply provided with all necessaries, I left it, inside the stage-coach, for Reading.

Mrs. Rachael was too good to feel any emotion at parting, but I was not so good, and wept bitterly. I thought that I ought to have known her better after so many years, and ought to have made myself enough of a favourite with her to make her sorry then. When she gave me one cold parting kiss upon my forehead, like a thaw-drop from the stone porch—it was a very frosty day—I felt so miserable and self-reproachful, that I clung to her and told her it was my fault, I knew, that she could say good bye so easily!

"No, Esther!" she returned. "It is your misfortune!"

The coach was at the little lawn-gate—we had not come out until we heard the wheels—and thus I left her, with a sorrowful heart. She went in before my boxes were lifted to the coach-roof, and shut the door. As long as I could see the house, I looked back at it from the window, through my tears. My godmother had left Mrs. Rachael all the little property she possessed; and there was to be a sale; and an old hearthrug with roses on it, which always seemed to me the first thing in the world I had ever seen, was hanging outside in the frost and snow. A day or two before, I had wrapped the dear old doll in her own shawl, and quietly laid her—I am half ashamed to tell it—in the garden-earth, under the tree that shaded my old window. I had no companion left but my bird, and him I carried with me in his cage.

When the house was out of sight, I sat, with my bird-cage in the straw at my feet, forward on the low seat, to look out of the high window; watching the frosty trees, that were like beautiful pieces of spar; and the fields all smooth and white with last night's snow; and the sun, so red but yielding so little heat; and the ice, dark like metal, where the skaters and sliders had brushed the snow away. There was a gentleman in the coach who sat on the opposite seat, and looked very large in a quantity of wrappings; but he sat gazing out of the other window, and took no notice of me.

I thought of my dead godmother; of the night when I read to her; of her frowning so fixedly and sternly in her bed; of the strange place I was going to; of the people I should find there, and what they would be like, and what they would say to me; when a voice in the coach gave me a terrible start.

It said, "What the de-vil are you crying for?"

I was so frightened that I lost my voice, and could only answer in a whisper.

"Me, sir?" For of course I knew it must have been the gentleman in the quantity of wrappings, though he was still looking out of his window.

"Yes you," he said, turning round.

"I didn't know I was crying, sir," I faltered.

"But you are!" said the gentleman. "Look here!" He came quite opposite to me from the other corner of the coach, brushed one of his large furry cuffs across my eyes (but without hurting me), and showed me that it was wet.

"There! Now you know you are," he said. "Don't you?"

"Yes, sir," I said.

"And what are you crying for?" said the gentleman. "Don't you want to go there?"

"Where, sir?"

"Where? Why, wherever you are going," said the gentleman.

"I am very glad to go there, sir," I answered.

"Well, then! Look glad!" said the gentleman.

I thought he was very strange; or at least that what I could see of him was very strange, for he was wrapped up to the chin, and his face was almost hidden in a fur cap, with broad fur straps at the side of his head, fastened under his chin; but I was composed again, and not afraid of him. So I told him that I thought I must have been crying, because of my godmother's death, and because of Mrs. Rachael's not being sorry to part with me.

"Con-found Mrs. Rachael!" said the gentleman. "Let her fly away in a high wind on a broomstick!"

I began to be really afraid of him now, and looked at him with the greatest astonishment. But I thought that he had pleasant eyes, although he kept on muttering to himself in an angry manner, and calling Mrs. Rachael names.

After a little while, he opened his outer wrapper, which appeared to me large enough to wrap up the whole coach, and put his arm down into a deep pocket in the side.

"Now, look here!" he said. "In this paper," which was nicely folded, "is a piece of the best plum-cake that can be got for money—sugar on the outside an inch thick, like fat on mutton chops. Here's a little pie (a gem this is, both for size and quality), made in France. And what do you suppose it's made of? Livers of fat geese. There's a pie! Now let's see you eat 'em."

"Thank you, sir," I replied, "thank you very much indeed, but I hope you won't be offended; they are too rich for me."

"Floored again!" said the gentleman, which I didn't at all understand; and threw them both out of window.

He did not speak to me any more, until he got out of the coach a little way short of Reading, when he advised me to be a good girl, and to be studious; and shook hands with me. I must say I was relieved by his departure. We left him at a milestone. I often walked past it afterwards, and never for a long time, without thinking of him, and half expecting to meet him. But I never did; and so, as time went on, he passed out of my mind.

When the coach stopped, a very neat lady looked up at the window, and said:

"Miss Donny."

"No, ma'am, Esther Summerson."

"That is quite right," said the lady, "Miss Donny."

I now understood that she introduced herself by that name, and I begged Miss Donny's pardon for my mistake, and pointed out my boxes at her request. Under the direction of a very neat maid, they were put outside a very small green carriage; and then Miss Donny, the maid, and I, got inside, and were driven away.

"Everything is ready *for you, Esther*," said Miss Donny, "and the scheme of

your pursuits has been arranged in exact accordance with the wishes of your guardian, Mr. Jarndyce."

"Of —— did you say, ma'am?"

"Of your guardian, Mr. Jarndyce," said Miss Donny.

I was so bewildered that Miss Donny thought the cold had been too severe for me, and lent me her smelling-bottle.

"Do you know my—guardian, Mr. Jarndyce, ma'am?" I asked, after a good deal of hesitation.

"Not personally, Esther," said Miss Donny; "merely through his solicitors, Messrs. Kenge and Carboy, of London. A very superior gentleman, Mr. Kenge. Truly eloquent indeed. Some of his periods quite majestic!"

I felt this to be very true, but was too confused to attend to it. Our speedy arrival at our destination, before I had time to recover myself, increased my confusion; and I never shall forget the uncertain and the unreal air of everything at Greenleaf (Miss Donny's house), that afternoon!

But I soon became used to it. I was so adapted to the routine of Greenleaf before long, that I seemed to have been there a great while: and almost to have dreamed rather than really lived, my old life at my godmother's. Nothing could be more precise, exact, and orderly, than Greenleaf. There was a time for everything all round the dial of the clock, and everything was done at its appointed moment.

We were twelve boarders, and there were two Miss Donnys, twins. It was understood that I would have to depend, by-and-by, on my qualifications as a governess; and I was not only instructed in everything that was taught at Greenleaf, but was very soon engaged in helping to instruct others. Although I was treated in every other respect like the rest of the school, this single difference was made in my case from the first. As I began to know more, I taught more, and so in course of time I had plenty to do, which I was very fond of doing, because it made the dear girls fond of me. At last, whenever a new pupil came who was a little downcast and unhappy, she was so sure—indeed I don't know why—to make a friend of me, that all new-comers were confided to my care. They said I was so gentle; but I am sure *they* were! I often thought of the resolution I had made on my birthday, to try to be industrious, contented, and true-hearted, and to do some good to some one, and win some love if I could; and indeed, indeed, I felt almost ashamed to have done so little and have won so much.

I passed at Greenleaf six happy, quiet years. I never saw in any face there, thank Heaven, on my birthday, that it would have been better if I had never been born. When the day came round, it brought me so many tokens of affectionate remembrance that my room was beautiful with them from New Year's Day to Christmas.

In those six years I had never been away, except on visits at holiday time in the neighbourhood. After the first six months or so, I had taken Miss Donny's advice in reference to the propriety of writing to Mr. Kenge, to say that I was happy and grateful; and with her approval I had written such a letter. I had received a formal answer acknowledging its receipt, and saying, "We note the contents thereof, which shall be duly communicated to our client." After that, I sometimes heard Miss Donny and her sister mention how regular my accounts were paid; and about twice a year I ventured to write a similar letter. I always received by return of post exactly the same answer, in the same round hand; with the signature of Kenge and Carboy in another writing, which I supposed to be Mr. Kenge's.

It seems so curious to me to be obliged to write all this about myself! As if this narrative were the narrative of *my* life! But my little body will soon fall into the back-ground now.

Six quiet years (I find I am saying it for the second time) I had passed a

Greenleaf, seeing in those around me, as it might be in a looking-glass, every stage of my own growth and change there, when, one November morning, I received this letter. I omit the date

Old Square, Lincoln's Inn.

Madam,

Jarndyce and Jarndyce.

Our clt Mr. Jarndyce being abt to rece into his house, under an Order of the Ct of Chy, a Ward of the Ct in this cause, for whom he wishes to secure an elgble compn, directs us to inform you that he will be glad of your serces in the afsd capacity.

We have arrngd for your being forded, carriage free, pt eight o'clock coach from Reading, on Monday morning next, to White Horse Cellar, Piccadilly, London, where one of our clks will be in waiting to convey you to our offe as above.

We are, Madam, Your obedt Servts,

Kenge and Carboy.

Miss Esther Summerson.

O, never, never, never shall I forget the emotion this letter caused in the house! It was so tender in them to care so much for me; it was so gracious in that Father who had not forgotten me, to have made my orphan way so smooth and easy, and to have inclined so many youthful natures towards me; that I could hardly bear it. Not that I would have had them less sorry—I am afraid not; but the pleasure of it, and the pain of it, and the pride and joy of it, and the humble regret of it, were so blended, that my heart seemed almost breaking while it was full of rapture.

The letter gave me only five days' notice of my removal. When every minute added to the proofs of love and kindness that were given me in those five days; and when at last the morning came, and when they took me through all the rooms that I might see them for the last time; and when some cried, "Esther, dear, say good-bye to me here, at my bedside, where you first spoke so kindly to me!" and when others asked me only to write their names, "With Esther's love;" and when they all surrounded me with their parting presents, and clung to me weeping, and cried, "What shall we do when dear, dear Esther's gone!" and when I tried to tell them how forbearing, and how good they had all been to me, and how I blessed, and thanked them every one; what a heart I had!

And when the two Miss Donnys grieved as much to part with me, as the least among them; and when the maids said, "Bless you, miss, wherever you go;" and when the ugly lame old gardener, who I thought had hardly noticed me in all those years, came panting after the coach to give me a little nosegay of geraniums, and told me I had been the light of his eyes—indeed the old man said so!—what a heart I had then!

And could I help it, if with all this, and the coming to the little school, and the unexpected sight of the poor children outside waving their hats and bonnets to me, and of a grey-haired gentleman and lady, whose daughter I had helped to teach and at whose house I had visited (who were said to be the proudest people in all that country), caring for nothing but calling out, "Good-bye, Esther. May you be very happy!"—could I help it if I was quite bowed down in the coach by myself, and said "O, I am so thankful, I am so thankful!" many times over!

But of course I soon considered that I must not take tears where I was going, after all that had been done for me. Therefore, of course, I made myself sobless, and persuaded myself to be quiet by saying very often, "Esther, now you really

must! This *will not* do!" I cheered myself up pretty well at last, though I am afraid I was longer about it than I ought to have been; and when I had cooled my eyes with lavender water, it was time to watch for London.

I was quite persuaded that we were there, when we were ten miles off; and when we really were there, that we should never get there. However, when we began to jolt upon a stone pavement, and particularly when every other conveyance seemed to be running into us, and we seemed to be running into every other conveyance, I began to believe that we really were approaching the end of our journey. Very soon afterwards we stopped.

A young gentleman who had inked himself by accident, addressed me from the pavement, and said, "I am from Kenge and Carboy's, miss, of Lincoln's Inn."

"If you please, sir," said I.

He was very obliging; and as he handed me into a fly, after superintending the removal of my boxes, I asked him whether there was a great fire anywhere? For the streets were so full of dense brown smoke that scarcely anything was to be seen.

"O dear no, miss," he said. "This is a London particular."

I had never heard of such a thing.

"A fog, miss," said the young gentleman.

"O indeed!" said I.

We drove slowly through the dirtiest and darkest streets that ever were seen in the world (I thought), and in such a distracting state of confusion that I wondered how the people kept their senses, until we passed into sudden quietude under an old gateway, and drove on through a silent square until we came to an odd nook in a corner, where there was an entrance up a steep, broad flight of stairs, like an entrance to a church. And there really was a churchyard, outside under some cloisters, for I saw the gravestones from the staircase window.

This was Kenge and Carboy's. The young gentleman showed me through an outer office into Mr. Kenge's room—there was no one in it—and politely put an arm-chair for me by the fire. He then called my attention to a little looking-glass, hanging from a nail on one side of the chimney-piece.

"In case you should wish to look at yourself, miss, after the journey, as you're going before the Chancellor. Not that it's requisite, I am sure," said the young gentleman civilly.

"Going before the Chancellor?" I said, startled for a moment.

"Only a matter of form, miss," returned the young gentleman. "Mr. Kenge is in Court now. He left his compliments, and would you partake of some refreshment;" there were biscuits and a decanter of wine on a small table; "and look over the paper;" which the young gentleman gave me as he spoke. He then stirred the fire, and left me.

Everything was so strange—the stranger from its being night in the day-time, the candles burning with a white flame, and looking raw and cold—that I read the words in the newspaper without knowing what they meant, and found myself reading the same words repeatedly. As it was of no use going on in that way, I put the paper down, took a peep at my bonnet in the glass to see if it was neat, and looked at the room which was not half lighted, and at the shabby dusty tables, and at the piles of writings, and at a bookcase full of the most inexpressive-looking books that ever had anything to say for themselves. Then I went on, thinking, thinking, thinking; and the fire went on, burning, burning, burning; and the candles went on flickering and guttering, and there were no snuffers—until the young gentleman by-and-by brought a very dirty pair; for two hours.

At last Mr. Kenge came. *He* was not altered; but he was surprised to see how altered I was, and appeared quite pleased. "As you are going to be the *companion of the young* lady who is now in the Chancellor's private room, Miss

Summerson," he said, "we thought it well that you should be in attendance also. You will not be discomposed by the Lord Chancellor, I dare say?"

"No, sir," I said, "I don't think I shall." Really not seeing, on consideration, why I should be.

So Mr. Kenge gave me his arm, and we went round the corner, under a colonnade, and in at a side door. And so we came, along a passage, into a comfortable sort of room, where a young lady and a young gentleman were standing near a great, loud-roaring fire. A screen was interposed between them and it, and they were leaning on the screen, talking.

They both looked up when I came in, and I saw in the young lady, with the fire shining upon her, such a beautiful girl! With such rich golden hair, such soft blue eyes, and such a bright, innocent, trusting face!

"Miss Ada," said Mr. Kenge, "this is Miss Summerson."

She came to meet me with a smile of welcome and her hand extended, but seemed to change her mind in a moment, and kissed me. In short, she had such a natural, captivating, winning manner, that in a few minutes we were sitting in the window-seat, with the light of the fire upon us, talking together, as free and happy as could be.

What a load off my mind! It was so delightful to know that she could confide in me, and like me! it was so good of her, and so encouraging to me!

The young gentleman was her distant cousin, she told me, and his name Richard Carstone. He was a handsome youth, with an ingenuous face, and a most engaging laugh; and after she had called him up to where we sat, he stood by us, in the light of the fire too, talking gaily, like a light-hearted boy. He was very young; not more than nineteen then, if quite so much, but nearly two years older than she was. They were both orphans, and (what was very unexpected and curious to me) had never met before that day. Our all three coming together for the first time, in such an unusual place, was a thing to talk about; and we talked about it; and the fire, which had left off roaring, winked its red eyes at us—as Richard said—like a drowsy old Chancery lion.

We conversed in a low tone, because a full-dressed gentleman in a bag wig frequently came in and out, and when he did so, we could hear a drawling sound in the distance, which he said was one of the counsel in our case addressing the Lord Chancellor. He told Mr. Kenge that the Chancellor would be up in five minutes; and presently we heard a bustle, and a tread of feet, and Mr. Kenge said that the Court had risen, and his lordship was in the next room.

The gentleman in the bag wig opened the door almost directly, and requested Mr. Kenge to come in. Upon that, we all went into the next room; Mr. Kenge first, with my darling—it is so natural to me now, that I can't help writing it; and there, plainly dressed in black, and sitting in an arm-chair at a table near the fire, was his lordship, whose robe, trimmed with beautiful gold-lace, was thrown upon another chair. He gave us a searching look as we entered, but his manner was both courtly and kind.

The gentleman in the bag wig laid bundles of papers on his lordship's table, and his lordship silently selected one, and turned over the leaves.

"Miss Clare," said the Lord Chancellor. "Miss Ada Clare?"

Mr. Kenge presented her, and his lordship begged her to sit down near him. That he admired her, and was interested by her, even *I* could see in a moment. It touched me, that the home of such a beautiful young creature should be represented by that dry official place. The Lord High Chancellor, at his best, appeared so poor a substitute for the love and pride of parents.

"The Jarndyce in question," said the Lord Chancellor, still turning over leaves, "is Jarndyce *of Bleak House.*"

"Jarndyce of Bleak House, my lord," said Mr. Kenge.

"A dreary name," said the Lord Chancellor.

"But not a dreary place at present, my lord," said Mr. Kenge.

"And Bleak House," said his lordship, "is in ——"

"Hertfordshire, my lord."

"Mr. Jarndyce of Bleak House is not married?" said his lordship.

"He is not, my lord," said Mr. Kenge.

A pause.

"Young Mr. Richard Carstone is present?" said the Lord Chancellor, glancing towards him.

Richard bowed and stepped forward.

"Hum!" said the Lord Chancellor, turning over more leaves.

"Mr. Jarndyce of Bleak House, my lord," Mr. Kenge observed, in a low voice, "if I may venture to remind your lordship, provides a suitable companion for ——"

"For Mr. Richard Carstone?" I thought (but I am not quite sure) I heard his lordship say, in an equally low voice, and with a smile.

"For Miss Ada Clare. This is the young lady. Miss Summerson."

His lordship gave me an indulgent look, and acknowledged my curtsey very graciously.

"Miss Summerson is not related to any party in the cause, I think?"

"No, my lord."

Mr. Kenge leant over before it was quite said, and whispered. His lordship, with his eyes upon his papers, listened, nodded twice or thrice, turned over more leaves, and did not look towards me again, until we were going away.

Mr. Kenge now retired, and Richard with him, to where I was, near the door, leaving my pet (it is so natural to me that again I can't help it!) sitting near the Lord Chancellor; with whom his lordship spoke a little apart; asking her, as she told me afterwards, whether she had well reflected on the proposed arrangement, and if she thought she would be happy under the roof of Mr. Jarndyce of Bleak House, and why she thought so? Presently he rose courteously and released her, and then he spoke for a minute or two with Richard Carstone; not seated, but standing, and altogether with more ease and less ceremony—as if he still knew, though he *was* Lord Chancellor, how to go straight to the candour of a boy.

"Very well!" said his lordship aloud. "I shall make the order. Mr. Jarndyce of Bleak House has chosen, so far as I may judge," and this was when he looked at me, "a very good companion for the young lady, and the arrangement altogether seems the best of which the circumstances admit."

He dismissed us pleasantly, and we all went out, very much obliged to him for being so affable and polite; by which he had certainly lost no dignity, but seemed to us to have gained some.

When we got under the colonnade, Mr. Kenge remembered that he must go back for a moment, to ask a question; and left us in the fog, with the Lord Chancellor's carriage and servants waiting for him to come out.

"Well!" said Richard Carstone, "*that's* over! And where do we go next, Miss Summerson?"

"Don't you know?" I said.

"Not in the least," said he.

"And don't *you* know, my love?" I asked Ada.

"No!" said she. "Don't you?"

"Not at all!" said I.

We looked at one another, half laughing at our being like the children in the wood, when a curious little old woman in a squeezed bonnet, and carrying a reticule, came curtseying and smiling up to us, with an air of great ceremony.

"O!" said she. "The wards in Jarndyce! Ve-ry happy, I am sure, to have the honour! It is a good omen for youth, and hope, and beauty, when they find themselves in this place, and don't know what's to come of it."

"Mad!" whispered Richard, not thinking she could hear him.

"Right! Mad, young gentleman," she returned so quickly that he was quite abashed. "I was a ward myself. I was not mad at that time," curtseying low, and smiling between every little sentence. "I had youth and hope. I believe, beauty. It matters very little now. Neither of the three served, or saved me. I have the honour to attend Court regularly. With my documents. I expect a judgment. Shortly. On the Day of Judgment. I have discovered that the sixth seal mentioned in the Revelations is the Great Seal. It has been open a long time! Pray accept my blessing."

As Ada was a little frightened, I said, to humour the poor old lady, that we were much obliged to her.

"Ye-es!" she said mincingly. "I imagine so. And here is Conversation Kenge. With *his* documents! How does your honourable worship do?"

"Quite well, quite well! Now don't be troublesome, that's a good soul!" said Mr. Kenge, leading the way back.

"By no means," said the poor old lady, keeping up with Ada and me. "Anything but troublesome. I shall confer estates on both,—which is not being troublesome, I trust? I expect a judgment. Shortly. On the Day of Judgment. This is a good omen for you. Accept my blessing!"

She stopped at the bottom of the steep, broad flight of stairs; but we looked back as we went up, and she was still there, saying, still with a curtsey and a smile between every little sentence, "Youth. And hope. And beauty. And Chancery. And Conversation Kenge! Ha! Pray accept my blessing!"

CHAPTER IV.

TELESCOPIC PHILANTHROPY.

We were to pass the night, Mr. Kenge told us when we arrived in his room, at Mrs. Jellyby's; and then he turned to me, and said he took it for granted I knew who Mrs. Jellyby was?

"I really don't, sir," I returned. "Perhaps Mr. Carstone—or Miss Clare——"

But no, they knew nothing whatever about Mrs. Jellyby.

"In-deed! Mrs. Jellyby," said Mr. Kenge, standing with his back to the fire, and casting his eyes over the dusty hearth-rug as if it were Mrs. Jellyby's biography, "is a lady of very remarkable strength of character, who devotes herself entirely to the public. She has devoted herself to an extensive variety of public subjects, at various times, and is at present (until something else attracts her) devoted to the subject of Africa; with a view to the general cultivation of the coffee berry—*and* the natives—and the happy settlement, on the banks of the African rivers, of our superabundant home population. Mr. Jarndyce, who is desirous to aid any work that is considered likely to be a good work, and who is much sought after by philanthropists, has, I believe, a very high opinion of Mrs. Jellyby."

Mr. Kenge, adjusting his cravat, then looked at us.

"And Mr. Jellyby, sir?" suggested Richard.

"Ah! Mr. Jellyby," said Mr. Kenge, "is—a—I don't know that I can describe him to you better than by saying that he is the husband of Mrs. Jellyby."

"A nonentity, sir?" said Richard, with a droll look.

"I don't say that," returned Mr. Kenge, gravely. "I can't say that, indeed, for I know nothing whatever *of* Mr. Jellyby. I never, to my knowledge, had the pleasure of seeing Mr. Jellyby. He may be a very superior man; but he is, so to speak, merged—Merged—in the more shining qualities of his wife." Mr. Kenge proceeded to tell us that as the road to Bleak House would have been very long, dark, and tedious, on such an evening, and as we had been travelling already, Mr. Jarndyce had himself proposed this arrangement. A carriage would be at Mrs. Jellyby's to convey us out of town, early in the forenoon of to-morrow.

He then rang a little bell, and the young gentleman came in. Addressing him by the name of Guppy, Mr. Kenge inquired whether Miss Summerson's boxes and the rest of the baggage had been "sent round." Mr. Guppy said yes, they had been sent round, and a coach was waiting to take us round too, as soon as we pleased.

"Then it only remains," said Mr. Kenge, shaking hands with us, "for me to express my lively satisfaction in (good day, Miss Clare!) the arrangement this day concluded, and my (*good* bye to you, Miss Summerson!) lively hope that it will conduce to the happiness, the (glad to have had the honour of making your acquaintance, Mr. Carstone!) welfare, the advantage in all points of view, of all concerned! Guppy, see the party safely there."

"Where *is* 'there,' Mr. Guppy?" said Richard, as we went down-stairs.

"No distance," said Mr. Guppy; "round in Thavies Inn, you know."

"I can't say I know where it is, for I come from Winchester, and am strange in London."

"Only round the corner," said Mr. Guppy. "We just twist up Chancery Lane, and cut along Holborn, and there we are in four minutes' time, as near as a toucher. This is about a London particular *now*, ain't it, miss?" He seemed quite delighted with it on my account.

"The fog is very dense, indeed!" said I.

"Not that it affects you, though, I'm sure," said Mr. Guppy, putting up the steps. "On the contrary, it seems to do you good, miss, judging from your appearance."

I knew he meant well in paying me this compliment, so I laughed at myself for blushing at it, when he had shut the door and got upon the box; and we all three laughed, and chatted about our inexperience, and the strangeness of London, until we turned up under an archway, to our destination: a narrow street of high houses, like an oblong cistern to hold the fog. There was a confused little crowd of people, principally children, gathered about the house at which we stopped, which had a tarnished brass plate on the door, with the inscription, JELLYBY.

"Don't be frightened!" said Mr. Guppy, looking in at the coach-window. "One of the young Jellybys been and got his head through the area railings!"

"O poor child," said I, "let me out, if you please!"

"Pray be careful of yourself, miss. The young Jellybys are always up to something," said Mr. Guppy.

I made my way to the poor child, who was one of the dirtiest little unfortunates I ever saw, and found him very hot and frightened, and crying loudly, fixed by the neck between two iron railings, while a milkman and a beadle, with the kindest intentions possible, were endeavouring to drag him back by the legs, under a general impression that his skull was compressible by those means. As I found *(after pacifying* him), that he was a little boy, with a naturally large head, I

thought that, perhaps, where his head could go, his body could follow, and mentioned that the best mode of extrication might be to push him forward. This was so favourably received by the milkman and beadle, that he would immediately have been pushed into the area, if I had not held his pinafore, while Richard and Mr. Guppy ran down through the kitchen, to catch him when he should be released. At last he was happily got down without any accident, and then he began to beat Mr. Guppy with a hoop-stick in quite a frantic manner.

Nobody had appeared belonging to the house, except a person in pattens, who had been poking at the child from below with a broom; I don't know with what object, and I don't think she did. I therefore supposed that Mrs. Jellyby was not at home; and was quite surprised when the person appeared in the passage without the pattens, and going up to the back room on the first floor, before Ada and me, announced us as, "Them two young ladies, Missis Jellyby!" We passed several more children on the way up, whom it was difficult to avoid treading on in the dark; and as we came into Mrs. Jellyby's presence, one of the poor little things fell down-stairs—down a whole flight (as it sounded to me), with a great noise.

Mrs. Jellyby, whose face reflected none of the uneasiness which we could not help showing in our own faces, as the dear child's head recorded its passage with a bump on every stair—Richard afterwards said he counted seven, besides one for the landing—received us with perfect equanimity. She was a pretty, very diminutive, plump woman, of from forty to fifty, with handsome eyes, though they had a curious habit of seeming to look a long way off. As if—I am quoting Richard again—they could see nothing nearer than Africa!

"I am very glad indeed," said Mrs. Jellyby, in an agreeable voice, "to have the pleasure of receiving you. I have a great respect for Mr. Jarndyce; and no one in whom he is interested can be an object of indifference to me."

We expressed our acknowledgments, and sat down behind the door where there was a lame invalid of a sofa. Mrs. Jellyby had very good hair, but was too much occupied with her African duties to brush it. The shawl in which she had been loosely muffled, dropped on to her chair when she advanced to us; and as she turned to resume her seat, we could not help noticing that her dress didn't nearly meet up the back, and that the open space was railed across with a lattice-work of stay-lace—like a summer-house.

The room, which was strewn with papers and nearly filled by a great writing-table covered with similar litter, was, I must say, not only very untidy, but very dirty. We were obliged to take notice of that with our sense of sight, even while, with our sense of hearing, we followed the poor child who had tumbled down-stairs: I think into the back kitchen, where somebody seemed to stifle him.

But what principally struck us was a jaded, and unhealthy-looking, though by no means plain girl, at the writing-table, who sat biting the feather of her pen, and staring at us. I suppose nobody ever was in such a state of ink. And, from her tumbled hair to her pretty feet, which were disfigured with frayed and broken satin slippers trodden down at heel, she really seemed to have no article of dress upon her, from a pin upwards, that was in its proper condition or its right place.

"You find me, my dears," said Mrs. Jellyby, snuffing the two great office candles in tin candlesticks which made the room taste strongly of hot tallow (the fire had gone out, and there was nothing in the grate but ashes, a bundle of wood, and a poker), "you find me, my dears, as usual, very busy; but that you will excuse. The African project at present employs my whole time. It involves me in correspondence with public bodies, and with private individuals anxious for the welfare of their species *all over the country*. I am happy to say it is ad-

vancing. We hope by this time next year to have from a hundred and fifty to two hundred healthy families cultivating coffee and educating the natives of Borrioboola-Gha, on the left bank of the Niger."

As Ada said nothing, but looked at me, I said it must be very gratifying.

"It *is* gratifying," said Mrs. Jellyby. "It involves the devotion of all my energies, such as they are; but that is nothing, so that it succeeds; and I am more confident of success every day. Do you know, Miss Summerson, I almost wonder that *you* never turned your thoughts to Africa."

This application of the subject was really so unexpected to me, that I was quite at a loss how to receive it. I hinted that the climate——

"The finest climate in the world!" said Mrs. Jellyby.

"Indeed, ma'am?"

"Certainly. With precaution," said Mrs. Jellyby. "You may go into Holborn, without precaution, and be run over. You may go into Holborn, with precaution, and never be run over. Just so with Africa."

I said, "No doubt."—I meant as to Holborn.

"If you would like," said Mrs. Jellyby, putting a number of papers towards us, "to look over some remarks on that head, and on the general subject (which have been extensively circulated), while I finish a letter I am now dictating—to my eldest daughter, who is my amanuensis——"

The girl at the table left off biting her pen, and made a return to our recognition, which was half bashful and half sulky.

"—I shall then have finished for the present," proceeded Mrs. Jellyby, with a sweet smile; "though my work is never done. Where are you, Caddy?"

"'Presents her compliments to Mr. Swallow, and begs——'" said Caddy.

"'And begs,'" said Mrs. Jellyby, dictating, "'to inform him, in reference to his letter of inquiry on the African project.'—No, Peepy! Not on any account!"

Peepy (so self-named) was the unfortunate child who had fallen down-stairs, who now interrupted the correspondence by presenting himself, with a strip of plaister on his forehead, to exhibit his wounded knees, in which Ada and I did not know which to pity most—the bruises or the dirt. Mrs. Jellyby merely added, with the serene composure with which she said everything, "Go along, you naughty Peepy!" and fixed her fine eyes on Africa again.

However, as she at once proceeded with her dictation, and as I interrupted nothing by doing it, I ventured quietly to stop poor Peepy as he was going out, and to take him up to nurse. He looked very much astonished at it, and at Ada's kissing him; but soon fell fast asleep in my arms, sobbing at longer and longer intervals, until he was quiet. I was so occupied with Peepy that I lost the letter in detail, though I derived such a general impression from it of the momentous importance of Africa, and the utter insignificance of all other places and things, that I felt quite ashamed to have thought so little about it.

"Six o'clock!" said Mrs. Jellyby. "And our dinner hour is nominally (for we dine at all hours) five! Caddy, show Miss Clare and Miss Summerson their rooms. You will like to make some change, perhaps? You will excuse me, I know, being so much occupied. O, that very bad child! Pray put him down, Miss Summerson!"

I begged permission to retain him, truly saying that he was not at all troublesome; and carried him up-stairs and laid him on my bed. Ada and I had two upper rooms, with a door of communication between. They were excessively bare and disorderly, and the curtain to my window was fastened up with a fork.

"You would like some hot water, wouldn't you?" said Miss Jellyby, looking round for a jug with a handle to it, but looking in vain.

is not being troublesome," said we.
t's not the trouble," returned Miss Jellyby; "the question is, if there *is*

vening was so very cold, and the rooms had such a marshy smell, that I nfess it was a little miserable; and Ada was half crying. We soon , however, and were busily unpacking, when Miss Jellyby came back to t she was sorry there was no hot water; but they couldn't find the kettle, boiler was out of order.
egged her not to mention it, and made all the haste we could to get the fire again. But all the little children had come up to the landing out- look at the phenomenon of Peepy lying on my bed; and our attention tracted by the constant apparition of noses and fingers, in situations of between the hinges of the doors. It was impossible to shut the door of om; for my lock, with no knob to it, looked as if it wanted to be wound l though the handle of Ada's went round and round with the greatest ess, it was attended with no effect whatever on the door. Therefore I d to the children that they should come in and be very good at my table, uld tell them the story of Little Red Riding Hood while I dressed; which , and were as quiet as mice, including Peepy, who awoke opportunely he appearance of the wolf.
we went down-stairs we found a mug, with "A Present from Tun- Wells" on it, lighted up in the staircase window with a floating wick; and woman, with a swelled face bound up in a flannel bandage, blowing the he drawing-room (now connected by an open door with Mrs. Jellyby's nd choaking dreadfully. It smoked to that degree in short, that we all hing and crying with the windows open for half an hour; during which llyby, with the same sweetness of temper, directed letters about Africa. g so employed was, I must say, a great relief to me; for Richard told us had washed his hands in a pie-dish, and that they had found the kettle ressing-table; and he made Ada laugh so, that they made me laugh in the iculous manner.
after seven o'clock we went down to dinner; carefully, by Mrs. Jellyby's for the stair-carpets, besides being very deficient in stair-wires, were so o be absolute traps. We had a fine cod-fish, a piece of roast beef, a dish s, and a pudding: an excellent dinner, if it had had any cooking to speak of, as almost raw. The young woman with the flannel bandage waited, and everything on the table wherever it happened to go, and never moved it ntil she put it on the stairs. The person I had seen in pattens (who I to have been the cook), frequently came and skirmished with her at the d there appeared to be ill-will between them.
nough dinner; which was long, in consequence of such accidents as the potatoes being mislaid in the coal skuttle, and the handle of the cork- ming off, and striking the young woman in the chin; Mrs. Jellyby d the evenness of her disposition. She told us a great deal that was ng about Borrioboola-Gha and the natives; and received so many at Richard, who sat by her, saw four envelopes in the gravy at once. f the letters were proceedings of ladies' committees, or resolutions of meetings, which she read to us; others were applications from people in various ways about the cultivation of coffee, and natives; others answers, and these she sent her eldest daughter from the table three times to write. She was full of business, and undoubtedly was, as she us, devoted to the cause.
a little *curious to know who a mild* bald gentleman in spectacles was,

who dropped into a vacant chair (there was no top or bottom in particular) after the fish was taken away, and seemed passively to submit himself to Borrioboola-Gha, but not to be actively interested in that settlement. As he never spoke a word, he might have been a native, but for his complexion. It was not until we left the table, and he remained alone with Richard, that the possibility of his being Mr. Jellyby ever entered my head. But he *was* Mr. Jellyby; and a loquacious young man called Mr. Quale, with large shining knobs for temples, and his hair all brushed to the back of his head, who came in the evening, and told Ada he was a philanthropist, also informed her that he called the matrimonial alliance of Mrs. Jellyby with Mr. Jellyby the union of mind and matter.

This young man, besides having a great deal to say for himself about Africa, and a project of his for teaching the coffee colonists to teach the natives to turn piano-forte legs and establish an export trade, delighted in drawing Mrs. Jellyby out by saying. "I believe now, Mrs. Jellyby, you have received as many as from one hundred and fifty to two hundred letters respecting Africa in a single day, have you not?" or, "If my memory does not deceive me, Mrs. Jellyby, you once mentioned that you had sent off five thousand circulars from one post-office at one time?"—always repeating Mrs. Jellyby's answer to us like an interpreter. During the whole evening, Mr. Jellyby sat in a corner with his head against the wall, as if he were subject to low spirits. It seemed that he had several times opened his mouth when alone with Richard, after dinner, as if he had something on his mind; but had always shut it again, to Richard's extreme confusion, without saying anything.

Mrs. Jellyby, sitting in quite a nest of waste paper, drank coffee all the evening, and dictated at intervals to her eldest daughter. She also held a discussion with Mr. Quale; of which the subject seemed to be—if I understood it—the Brotherhood of Humanity; and gave utterance to some beautiful sentiments. I was not so attentive an auditor as I might have wished to be, however, for Peepy and the other children came flocking about Ada and me in a corner of the drawing-room to ask for another story; so we sat down among them, and told them in whispers Puss in Boots and I don't know what else, until Mrs. Jellyby accidentally remembering them, sent them to bed. As Peepy cried for me to take him to bed, I carried him up-stairs, where the young woman with the flannel bandage charged into the midst of the little family like a dragon, and overturned them into cribs.

After that, I occupied myself in making our room a little tidy, and in coaxing a very cross fire that had been lighted, to burn; which at last it did, quite brightly. On my return down-stairs, I felt that Mrs. Jellyby looked down upon me rather, for being so frivolous; and I was sorry for it; though at the same time I knew that I had no higher pretensions.

It was nearly midnight before we found an opportunity of going to bed; and even then we left Mrs. Jellyby among her papers drinking coffee, and Miss Jellyby biting the feather of her pen.

"What a strange house!" said Ada, when we got up-stairs. "How curious of my cousin Jarndyce to send us here!"

"My love," said I, "it quite confuses me. I want to understand it, and I can't understand it at all."

"What?" asked Ada, with her pretty smile.

"All this, my dear," said I. "It *must* be very good of Mrs. Jellyby to take such pains about a scheme for the benefit of Natives—and yet—Peepy and the housekeeping!"

Ada laughed; and put her arm about my neck, as I stood looking at the fire; and told me I was a quiet, dear, good creature, and had won her heart. "You

are so thoughtful, Esther," she said, "and yet so cheerful! and you do so much, so unpretendingly! You would make a home out of even this house."

My simple darling! She was quite unconscious that she only praised herself, and that it was in the goodness of her own heart that she made so much of me!

"May I ask you a question?" said I, when we had sat before the fire a little while.

"Five hundred," said Ada.

"Your cousin, Mr. Jarndyce. I owe so much to him. Would you mind describing him to me?"

Shaking her golden hair, Ada turned her eyes upon me with such laughing wonder, that I was full of wonder too—partly at her beauty, partly at her surprise.

"Esther!" she cried.

"My dear!"

"You want a description of my cousin Jarndyce?"

"My dear, I never saw him."

"And *I* never saw him!" returned Ada.

Well, to be sure!

No, she had never seen him. Young as she was when her mama died, she remembered how the tears would come into her eyes, when she spoke of him, and of the noble generosity of his character, which she had said was to be trusted above all earthly things; and Ada trusted it. Her cousin Jarndyce had written to her a few months ago,—"a plain, honest letter," Ada said—proposing the arrangement we were now to enter on, and telling her that, "in time it might heal some of the wounds made by the miserable Chancery suit." She had replied, gratefully accepting his proposal. Richard had received a similar letter, and had made a similar response. He *had* seen Mr. Jarndyce once, but only once, five years ago, at Winchester school. He had told Ada, when they were leaning on the screen before the fire where I found them, that he recollected him as "a bluff, rosy fellow." This was the utmost description Ada could give me.

It set me thinking so, that when Ada was asleep, I still remained before the fire, wondering and wondering about Bleak House, and wondering and wondering that yesterday morning should seem so long ago. I don't know where my thoughts had wandered, when they were recalled by a tap at the door.

I opened it softly, and found Miss Jellyby shivering there, with a broken candle in a broken candlestick in one hand, and an egg-cup in the other.

"Good night!" she said, very sulkily.

"Good night!" said I.

"May I come in?" she shortly and unexpectedly asked me in the same sulky way.

"Certainly," said I. "Don't wake Miss Clare."

She would not sit down, but stood by the fire, dipping her inky middle finger in the egg-cup, which contained vinegar, and smearing it over the ink stains on her face; frowning, the whole time, and looking very gloomy.

"I wish Africa was dead!" she said, on a sudden.

I was going to remonstrate.

"I do!" she said. "Don't talk to me, Miss Summerson. I hate it and detest it. It's a beast!"

I told her she was tired, and I was sorry. I put my hand upon her head, and touched her forehead, and said it was hot now, but would be cool to-morrow. She still stood, pouting and frowning at me; but presently put down her egg-cup, and turned softly towards the bed where Ada lay.

"She is very pretty!" she said, with the same knitted brow, and in the same uncivil manner.

I assented with a smile.

"An orphan. Ain't she?"

"Yes."

"But knows a quantity, I suppose? Can dance, and play music, and si
She can talk French, I suppose, and do geography, and globes, and needlew
and everything?"

"No doubt," said I.

"*I* can't," she returned. "I can't do anything hardly, except write.
always writing for Ma. I wonder you two were not ashamed of yourselve
come in this afternoon, and see me able to do nothing else. It was like
ill-nature. Yet you think yourselves very fine, I dare say!"

I could see that the poor girl was near crying, and I resumed my chair wit
speaking, and looked at her (I hope) as mildly as I felt towards her.

"It's disgraceful," she said. "You know it is. The whole house is disgr
ful. The children are disgraceful. *I*'m disgraceful. Pa's miserable, and
wonder! Priscilla drinks—she's always drinking. It's a great shame an
great story of you, if you say you didn't smell her to-day. It was as bad
public-house, waiting at dinner; you know it was!"

"My dear, I don't know it," said I.

"You do," she said, very shortly. "You shan't say you don't. You do!

"O, my dear!" said I, "if you won't let me speak——"

"You're speaking now. You know you are. Don't tell stories, Miss S
merson."

"My dear," said I, "as long as you won't hear me out——"

"I don't want to hear you out."

"O yes, I think you do," said I, "because that would be so very unreasona
I did not know what you tell me, because the servant did not come near m
dinner; but I don't doubt what you tell me, and I am sorry to hear it."

"You needn't make a merit of that," said she.

"No, my dear," said I. "That would be very foolish."

She was still standing by the bed, and now stooped down (but still with
same discontented face) and kissed Ada. That done, she came softly back,
stood by the side of my chair. Her bosom was heaving in a distressful mar
that I greatly pitied; but I thought it better not to speak.

"I wish I was dead!" she broke out. "I wish we were all dead. It wc
be a great deal better for us."

In a moment afterwards, she knelt on the ground at my side, hid her fac
my dress, passionately begged my pardon, and wept. I comforted her,
would have raised her, but she cried, No, no; she wanted to stay there!

"You used to teach girls," she said. "If you could only have taught m
could have learnt from you! I am so very miserable, and I like you so much

I could not persuade her to sit by me, or to do anything but move a rag
stool to where she was kneeling, and take that, and still hold my dress in
same manner. By degrees, the poor tired girl fell asleep; and then I contri
to raise her head so that it should rest on my lap, and to cover us both
shawls. The fire went out, and all night long she slumbered thus before
ashy grate. At first I was painfully awake, and vainly tried to lose myself,
my eyes closed, among the scenes of the day. At length, by slow degrees, t
became indistinct and mingled. I began to lose the identity of the sleeper
ing on me. Now it was Ada; now, one of my old Reading friends from wl
I could not believe I had so recently parted. Now, it was the little mad wo
worn out with curtseying and smiling; now, some one in authority at B
House. Lastly, it was no one, and I was no one.

rthlind day was feebly struggling with the fog, when I opened my eyes nter those of a dirty-faced little spectre fixed upon me. Peepy had is crib, and crept down in his bedgown and cap, and was so cold that were chattering as if he had cut them all.

CHAPTER V.

A MORNING ADVENTURE.

GH the morning was raw, and although the fog still seemed heavy—I say for the windows were so encrusted with dirt, that they would have made ner sunshine dim—I was sufficiently forewarned of the discomfort within that early hour, and sufficiently curious about London, to think it a good he part of Miss Jellyby when she proposed that we should go out for a

won't be down for ever so long," she said, "and then it's a chance if 's ready for an hour afterwards, they dawdle so. As to Pa, he gets what and goes to the office. He never has what you would call a regular . Priscilla leaves him out the loaf and some milk, when there is any, ht. Sometimes there isn't any milk, and sometimes the cat drinks it. afraid you must be tired, Miss Summerson; and perhaps you would to bed."

not at all tired, my dear," said I, "and would much prefer to go out."
u're sure you would," returned Miss Jellyby, "I'll get my things on."
id she would go too, and was soon astir. I made a proposal to Peepy, of being able to do anything better for him, that he should let me wash afterwards lay him down on my bed again. To this he submitted with grace possible; staring at me during the whole operation, as if he never n, and never could again be, so astonished in his life—looking very also, certainly, but making no complaint, and going snugly to sleep as was over. At first I was in two minds about taking such a liberty, but ffected that nobody in the house was likely to notice it.

with the bustle of dispatching Peepy, and the bustle of getting myself d helping Ada, I was soon quite in a glow. We found Miss Jellyby warm herself at the fire in the writing-room, which Priscilla was then with a smutty parlour candlestick—throwing the candle in to make it burn Everything was just as we had left it last night, and was evidently to remain so. Below-stairs the dinner-cloth had not been taken away, been left ready for breakfast. Crumbs, dust, and waste paper were all house. Some pewter-pots and a milk-can hung on the area railings; stood open; and we met the cook round the corner coming out of a use, wiping her mouth. She mentioned, as she passed us, that she had ee what o'clock it was.

fore we met the cook, we met Richard, who was dancing up and down lm to warm his feet. He was agreeably surprised to see us stirring so d said he would gladly share our walk. So he took care of Ada, and yby and I went first. I may mention that Miss Jellyby had relapsed sulky manner, and that I really should not have thought she liked me less she had told me so.

ere would you wish to go?" she asked.

"Anywhere, my dear?" I replied.

"Anywhere's nowhere," said Miss Jellyby, stopping perversely.

"Let us go somewhere at any rate," said I.

She then walked me on very fast.

"I don't care!" she said. "Now, you are my witness, Miss Summerson, I say I don't care—but if he was to come to our house, with his great shining lumpy forehead, night after night, till he was as old as Methuselah, I wouldn't have anything to say to him. Such ASSES as he and Ma make of themselves!"

"My dear!" I remonstrated, in allusion to the epithet, and the vigorous emphasis Miss Jellyby set upon it. "Your duty as a child ——"

"O! don't talk of duty as a child, Miss Summerson; where's Ma's duty as a parent? All made over to the public and Africa, I suppose! Then let the public and Africa show duty as a child; it's much more their affair than mine. You are shocked, I dare say! Very well, so am I shocked too; so we are both shocked, and there's an end of it!"

She walked me on faster yet.

"But for all that, I say again, he may come, and come, and come, and I won't have anything to say to him. I can't bear him. If there's any stuff in the world that I hate and detest, it's the stuff he and Ma talk. I wonder the very paving-stones opposite our house can have the patience to stay there, and be a witness of such inconsistencies and contradictions as all that sounding nonsense, and Ma's management!"

I could not but understand her to refer to Mr. Quale, the young gentleman who had appeared after dinner yesterday. I was saved the disagreeable necessity of pursuing the subject, by Richard and Ada coming up at a round pace, laughing, and asking us if we meant to run a race? Thus interrupted, Miss Jellyby became silent, and walked moodily on at my side; while I admired the long successions and varieties of streets, the quantity of people already going to and fro, the number of vehicles passing and repassing, the busy preparations in the setting forth of shop windows and the sweeping out of shops, and the extraordinary creatures in rags, secretly groping among the swept-out rubbish for pins and other refuse.

"So, cousin," said the cheerful voice of Richard to Ada, behind me. "We are never to get out of Chancery! We have come by another way to our place of meeting yesterday, and—by the Great Seal, here's the old lady again!"

Truly, there she was, immediately in front of us, curtseying, and smiling, and saying, with her yesterday's air of patronage:

"The wards in Jarndyce! Ve-ry happy, I am sure!"

"You are out early, ma'am," said I, as she curtseyed to me.

"Ye-es! I usually walk here early. Before the Court sits. It's retired. I collect my thoughts here for the business of the day," said the old lady, mincingly. "The business of the day requires a great deal of thought. Chancery justice is so ve-ry difficult to follow."

"Who's this, Miss Summerson?" whispered Miss Jellyby, drawing my arm tighter through her own.

The little old lady's hearing was remarkably quick. She answered for herself directly.

"A suitor, my child. At your service. I have the honour to attend court regularly. With my documents. Have I the pleasure of addressing another of the youthful parties in Jarndyce?" said the old lady, recovering herself, with her head on one side, from a very low curtsey.

Richard, anxious to atone for his thoughtlessness of yesterday, good-naturedly explained that Miss Jellyby was not connected with the suit.

" said the old lady. "She does not expect a judgment? She will still
. But not so old. O dear, no! This is the garden of Lincoln's Inn. I
r garden. It is quite a bower in the summer-time. Where the birds sing
ly. I pass the greater part of the long vacation here. In contemplation.
the long vacation exceedingly long, don't you?"
d yes, as she seemed to expect us to say so.
n the leaves are falling from the trees, and there are no more flowers in
make up into nosegays for the Lord Chancellor's court," said the old
e vacation is fulfilled; and the sixth seal, mentioned in the Revelations,
vails. Pray come and see my lodging. It will be a good omen for me.
nd hope, and beauty, are very seldom there. It is a long long time since
risit from either."
ad taken my hand, and, leading me and Miss Jellyby away, beckoned
and Ada to come too. I did not know how to excuse myself, and looked
rd for aid. As he was half amused and half curious, and all in doubt
et rid of the old lady without offence, she continued to lead us away, and
Ada continued to follow; our strange conductress informing us all the
h much smiling condescension, that she lived close by.
quite true, as it soon appeared. She lived so close by, that we had not
ave done humouring her for a few moments, before she was at home.
us out at a little side gate, the old lady stopped most unexpectedly in a
ack street, part of some courts and lanes immediately outside the wall of
and said, "This is my lodging. Pray walk up!"
d stopped at a shop, over which was written, KROOK, RAG AND BOTTLE
OUSE. Also, in long thin letters, KROOK, DEALER IN MARINE STORES.
art of the window was a picture of a red paper mill, at which a cart was
a quantity of sacks of old rags. In another, was the inscription,
BOUGHT. In another, KITCHEN-STUFF BOUGHT. In another, OLD
UGHT. In another, WASTE PAPER BOUGHT. In another, LADIES'
NTLEMEN'S WARDROBES BOUGHT. Everything seemed to be bought,
ing to be sold there. In all parts of the window, were quantities of dirty
blacking bottles, medicine bottles, ginger-beer and soda-water bottles,
ttles, wine bottles, ink bottles: I am reminded by mentioning the latter,
shop had, in several little particulars, the air of being in a legal neigh-
d, and of being, as it were, a dirty hanger-on and disowned relation of
There were a great many ink bottles. There was a little tottering bench
y old volumes, outside the door, labelled "Law Books, all at 9*d*." Some
scriptions I have enumerated were written in law-hand, like the papers I
in Kenge and Carboy's office, and the letters I had so long received from
. Among them was one, in the same writing, having nothing to do with
ess of the shop, but announcing that a respectable man aged forty-five
engrossing or copying to execute with neatness and dispatch: Address to
are of Mr. Krook within. There were several second-hand bags, blue and
ging up. A little way within the shop-door, lay heaps of old crackled
nt scrolls, and discoloured and dog's-eared law-papers. I could have
hat all the rusty keys, of which there must have been hundreds huddled
as old iron, had once belonged to doors of rooms or strong chests in
offices. The litter of rags tumbled partly into and partly out of a one-
wooden scale, hanging without any counterpoise from a beam, might have
nsellors' hands and gowns torn up. One had only to fancy, as Richard
d to Ada and me while we all stood looking in, that yonder bones in a
iled together and picked very clean, were the bones of clients, to make
re complete.

As it was still foggy and dark, and as the shop was blinded besides by the wall of Lincoln's Inn, intercepting the light within a couple of yards, we should not have seen so much but for a lighted lantern that an old man in spectacles and a hairy cap was carrying about in the shop. Turning towards the door, he now caught sight of us. He was short, cadaverous, and withered; with his head sunk sideways between his shoulders, and the breath issuing in visible smoke from his mouth, as if he were on fire within. His throat, chin, and eyebrows were so frosted with white hairs, and so gnarled with veins and puckered skin, that he looked from his breast upward, like some old root in a fall of snow.

"Hi hi!" said the old man coming to the door. "Have you anything to sell?"

We naturally drew back and glanced at our conductress, who had been trying to open the house-door with a key she had taken from her pocket, and to whom Richard now said, that, as we had had the pleasure of seeing where she lived, we would leave her, being pressed for time. But she was not to be so easily left. She became so fantastically and pressingly earnest in her entreaties that we would walk up, and see her apartment for an instant; and was so bent, in her harmless way, on leading me in, as part of the good omen she desired; that I (whatever the others might do) saw nothing for it but to comply. I suppose we were all more or less curious;—at any rate, when the old man added his persuasions to hers, and said, "Aye, aye! Please her! It won't take a minute! Come in, come in! Come in through the shop, if t'other door 's out of order!" we all went in, stimulated by Richard's laughing encouragement, and relying on his protection.

"My landlord, Krook," said the little old lady, condescending to him from her lofty station, as she presented him to us. "He is called among the neighbours the Lord Chancellor. His shop is called the Court of Chancery. He is a very eccentric person. He is very odd. Oh, I assure you he is very odd!"

She shook her head a great many times, and tapped her forehead with her finger, to express to us that we must have the goodness to excuse him, "For he is a little—you know!—M—!" said the old lady, with great stateliness. The old man overheard, and laughed.

"It's true enough," he said, going before us with the lantern, "that they call me the Lord Chancellor, and call my shop Chancery. And why do you think they call me the Lord Chancellor, and my shop Chancery?"

"I don't know, I am sure!" said Richard, rather carelessly.

"You see," said the old man, stopping and turning round, "they—Hi! Here's lovely hair! I have got three sacks of ladies' hair below, but none so beautiful and fine as this. What colour, and what texture!"

"That'll do, my good friend!" said Richard, strongly disapproving of his having drawn one of Ada's tresses through his yellow hand. "You can admire as the rest of us do, without taking that liberty."

The old man darted at him a sudden look, which even called my attention from Ada, who startled and blushing, was so remarkably beautiful that she seemed to fix the wandering attention of the little old lady herself. But as Ada interposed, and laughingly said she could only feel proud of such genuine admiration, Mr. Krook shrunk into his former self as suddenly as he had leaped out of it.

"You see I have so many things here," he resumed, holding up the lantern, "of so many kinds, and all as the neighbours think (but *they* know nothing), wasting away and going to rack and ruin, that that's why they have given me and my place a christening. And I have so many old parchmentses and papers in my stock. And I have a liking for rust and must and cobwebs. And all's fish that comes to my net. And I can't abear to part with anything I once lay hold of (or

ighbours think, but what do *they* know?) or to alter anything, or to have
eping, nor scouring, nor cleaning, nor repairing going on about me.
e way I've got the ill name of Chancery. *I* don't mind. I go to see my
d learned brother pretty well every day, when he sits in the Inn. He
ice me, but I notice him. There's no great odds betwixt us. We both
in a muddle. Hi, Lady Jane!"
e grey cat leaped from some neighbouring shelf on his shoulder, and
s all.
show 'em how you scratch. Hi! Tear, my lady!" said her master.
t leaped down, and ripped at a bundle of rags with her tigerish claws,
nd that it set my teeth on edge to hear.
d do as much for any one I was to set her on," said the old man. "I
at-skins among other general matters, and hers was offered to me. It's a
skin, as you may see, but I didn't have it stripped off! *That* warn't like
practice though, says you!"
d by this time led us across the shop, and now opened a door in the back
, leading to the house-entry. As he stood with his hand upon the lock,
old lady graciously observed to him before passing out:
will do, Krook. You mean well, but are tiresome. My young friends
ed for time. I have none to spare myself, having to attend court very
ly young friends are the wards in Jarndyce."
dyce!" said the old man with a start.
dyce and Jarndyce. The great suit, Krook," returned his lodger.
" exclaimed the old man, in a tone of thoughtful amazement, and with a
re than before, "Think of it!"
emed so rapt all in a moment, and looked so curiously at us, that
said:
you appear to trouble yourself a good deal about the causes before your
d learned brother, the other Chancellor!"
" said the old man abstractedly. "Sure! *Your* name now will be ——"
ard Carstone."
tone," he repeated, slowly checking off that name upon his forefinger;
of the others he went on to mention, upon a separate finger. "Yes.
s the name of Barbary, and the name of Clare, and the name of Dedlock,
nk."
nows as much of the cause as the real salaried Chancellor!" said Richard,
nished, to Ada and me.
" said the old man, coming slowly out of his abstraction. "Yes! Tom
—you'll excuse me, being related; but he was never known about court
ther name, and was as well known there, as—she is now;" nodding
t his lodger; "Tom Jarndyce was often in here. He got into a restless
strolling about when the cause was on, or expected, talking to the little
ers, and telling 'em to keep out of Chancery, whatever they did. 'For,'
it's being ground to bits in a slow mill; it's being roasted at a slow fire;
stung to death by single bees; it's being drowned by drops; it's going
rains.' He was as near making away with himself, just where the young
ds, as near could be."
tened with horror.
come in at the door," said the old man, slowly pointing an imaginary
ng the shop, "on the day he did it—the whole neighbourhood had said
s before, that he would do it, of a certainty sooner or later—he come in
oor that day, and walked along there, and sat himself on a bench that
re, and asked *me (you'll judge I* was a mortal sight younger then) to

fetch him a pint of wine. 'For,' says he, 'Krook, I am much depressed; my cause is on again, and I think I'm nearer judgment than I ever was.' I hadn't a mind to leave him alone; and I persuaded him to go to the tavern over the way there, t'other side my lane (I mean Chancery Lane); and I followed and looked in at the window, and saw him, comfortable as I thought, in the arm-chair by the fire, and company with him. I hadn't hardly got back here, when I heard a shot go echoing and rattling right away into the inn. I ran out—neighbours ran out—twenty of us cried at once, 'Tom Jarndyce!'"

The old man stopped, looked hard at us, looked down into the lantern, blew the light out, and shut the lantern up.

"We were right, I needn't tell the present hearers. Hi! To be sure, how the neighbourhood poured into court that afternoon while the cause was on! How my noble and learned brother, and all the rest of 'em, grubbed and muddled away as usual, and tried to look as if they hadn't heard a word of the last fact in the case; or as if they had—O dear me!—nothing at all to do with it, if they had heard of it by any chance!"

Ada's colour had entirely left her, and Richard was scarcely less pale. Nor could I wonder, judging even from my emotions, and I was no party in the suit, that to hearts so untried and fresh, it was a shock to come into the inheritance of a protracted misery, attended in the minds of many people with such dreadful recollections. I had another uneasiness, in the application of the painful story to the poor half-witted creature who had brought us there: but, to my surprise, she seemed perfectly unconscious of that, and only led the way up-stairs again; informing us, with the toleration of a superior creature for the infirmities of a common mortal, that her landlord was "a little—M—, you know!"

She lived at the top of the house, in a pretty large room, from which she had a glimpse of Lincoln's Inn Hall. This seemed to have been her principal inducement, originally, for taking up her residence there. She could look at it, she said, in the night: especially in the moonshine. Her room was clean, but very, very bare. I noticed the scantiest necessaries in the way of furniture; a few old prints from books, of Chancellors and barristers, wafered against the wall; and some half-dozen reticules and work-bags, "containing documents," as she informed us. There were neither coals nor ashes in the grate, and I saw no articles of clothing anywhere, nor any kind of food. Upon a shelf in an open cupboard were a plate or two, a cup or two, and so forth; but all dry and empty. There was a more affecting meaning in her pinched appearance, I thought as I looked round, than I had understood before.

"Extremely honoured, I am sure," said our poor hostess, with the greatest suavity, "by this visit from the wards in Jarndyce. And very much indebted for the omen. It is a retired situation. Considering. I am limited as to situation. In consequence of the necessity of attending on the Chancellor. I have lived here many years. I pass my days in court; my evenings and my nights here. I find the nights long, for I sleep but little, and think much. That is, of course, unavoidable; being in Chancery. I am sorry I cannot offer chocolate. I expect a judgment shortly, and shall then place my establishment on a superior footing. At present, I don't mind confessing to the wards in Jarndyce (in strict confidence), that I sometimes find it difficult to keep up a genteel appearance. I have felt the cold here. I have felt something sharper than cold. It matters very little. Pray excuse the introduction of such mean topics."

She partly drew aside the curtain of the long low garret-window, and called our attention to a number of bird-cages hanging there: some, containing several birds. There were larks, linnets, and goldfinches—I should think at least twenty.

"I began to keep the little creatures," she said, "with an object that the wards

ly comprehend. With the intention of restoring them to liberty. When
nent should be given. Ye-es! They die in prison, though. Their lives,
things, are so short in comparison with Chancery proceedings, that, one
he whole collection has died over and over again. I doubt, do you know,
one of these, though they are all young, will live to be free! Ve-ry mor-
it not?"

gh she sometimes asked a question, she never seemed to expect a reply;
led on as if she were in the habit of doing so, when no one but herself
nt.

d," she pursued, "I positively doubt sometimes, I do assure you, whe-
e matters are still unsettled, and the sixth or Great Seal still prevails, *I*
one day be found lying stark and senseless here, as I have found so many

d, answering what he saw in Ada's compassionate eyes, took the oppor-
laying some money, softly and unobserved, on the chimney-piece. We
nearer to the cages, feigning to examine the birds.

't allow them to sing much," said the little old lady, "for (you'll think
s) I find my mind confused by the idea that they are singing, while I am
the arguments in Court. And my mind requires to be so very clear, you
Another time, I'll tell you their names. Not at present. On a day of
l omen, they shall sing as much as they like. In honour of youth," a
l curtsey; "hope," a smile and curtsey; "and beauty," a smile and
"There! We'll let in the full light."

ds began to stir and chirp.

not admit the air freely," said the little old lady; the room was close,
l have been the better for it; "because the cat you saw down-stairs—
dy Jane—is greedy for their lives. She crouches on the parapet out-
ours and hours. I have discovered," whispering mysteriously, "that
l cruelty is sharpened by a jealous fear of their regaining their liberty.
quence of the judgment I expect being shortly given. She is sly.
malice. I half believe, sometimes, that she is no cat, but the wolf of
ying. It is so very difficult to keep her from the door."

eighbouring bells, reminding the poor soul that it was half-past nine, did
s in the way of bringing our visit to an end, than we could easily have
urselves. She hurriedly took up her little bag of documents, which she
pon the table on coming in, and asked if we were also going into Court?
nswering no, and that we would on no account detain her, she opened
to attend us down-stairs.

such an omen, it is even more necessary than usual that I should be
re the Chancellor comes in," said she, "for he might mention my case
hing. I have a presentiment that he *will* mention it the first thing this
"

pped to tell us, in a whisper, as we were going down, that the whole
filled with strange lumber which her landlord had bought piecemeal,
o wish to sell, in consequence of being a little—M—. This was on the
But she had made a previous stoppage on the second floor, and had
inted at a dark door there.

nly other lodger," she now whispered, in explanation; "a law-writer.
en in the lanes here, say he has sold himself to the devil. I don't know
an have done with the money. Hush!"

peared to mistrust that the lodger might hear her, even there; and
"Hush!" went before us on tiptoe, as though even the sound of her
might reveal to him what she had said.

Passing through the shop on our way out, as we had passed through it on our way in, we found the old man stowing a quantity of packets of waste paper, in a kind of well in the floor. He seemed to be working hard, with the perspiration standing on his forehead, and had a piece of chalk by him; with which, as he put each separate package or bundle down, he made a crooked mark on the panelling of the wall.

Richard and Ada, and Miss Jellyby, and the little old lady, had gone by him, and I was going, when he touched me on the arm to stay me, and chalked the letter J upon the wall—in a very curious manner, beginning with the end of the letter, and shaping it backward. It was a capital letter, not a printed one, but just such a letter as any clerk in Messrs. Kenge and Carboy's office would have made.

"Can you read it?" he asked me with a keen glance.

"Surely," said I. "It's very plain."

"What is it?"

"J."

With another glance at me, and a glance at the door, he rubbed it out, and turned an a in its place (not a capital letter this time), and said, "What's that?"

I told him. He then rubbed that out, and turned the letter a, and asked me the same question. He went on quickly, until he had formed, in the same curious manner, beginning at the ends and bottoms of the letters, the word JARNDYCE, without once leaving two letters on the wall together.

"What does that spell?" he asked me.

When I told him, he laughed. In the same odd way, yet with the same rapidity, he then produced singly, and rubbed out singly, the letters forming the words BLEAK HOUSE. These, in some astonishment, I also read; and he laughed again.

"Hi!" said the old man, laying aside the chalk, "I have a turn for copying from memory, you see, miss, though I can neither read nor write."

He looked so disagreeable, and his cat looked so wickedly at me, as if I were a blood-relation of the birds up-stairs, that I was quite relieved by Richard's appearing at the door and saying:

"Miss Summerson, I hope you are not bargaining for the sale of your hair. Don't be tempted. Three sacks below are quite enough for Mr. Krook!"

I lost no time in wishing Mr. Krook good morning, and joining my friends outside, where we parted with the little old lady, who gave us her blessing with great ceremony, and renewed her assurance of yesterday in reference to her intention of settling estates on Ada and me. Before we finally turned out of those lanes, we looked back, and saw Mr. Krook standing at his shop-door, in his spectacles, looking after us, with his cat upon his shoulder, and her tail sticking up on one side of his hairy cap, like a tall feather.

"Quite an adventure for a morning in London!" said Richard, with a sigh. "Ah, cousin, cousin, it's a weary word this Chancery!"

"It is to me, and has been ever since I can remember," returned Ada. "I am grieved that I should be the enemy—as I suppose I am—of a great number of relations and others; and that they should be my enemies—as I suppose they are—and that we should all be ruining one another, without knowing how or why, and living in constant doubt and discord all our lives. It seems very strange, as there must be right somewhere, that an honest judge in real earnest has not been able to find out through all these years where it is."

"Ah, cousin!" said Richard. "Strange, indeed! all this wasteful wantonness of chess-playing is very strange. To see that composed Court yesterday jogging on so serenely, and to think of the wretchedness of the pieces on the board, gave me the headache and the heartache both together. My head ached with wondering

I happened, if men were neither fools nor rascals; and my heart ached to think they could possibly be either. But at all events, Ada—I may call you "

"Of course you may, cousin Richard."

"At all events, Chancery will work none of its bad influences on *us*. We have happily been brought together, thanks to our good kinsman, and it can't part us now!"

"Never, I hope, cousin Richard!" said Ada, gently.

As Jellyby gave my arm a squeeze, and me a very significant look. I smiled again, and we made the rest of the way back very pleasantly.

Half an hour after our arrival, Mrs. Jellyby appeared; and in the course of after the various things necessary for breakfast straggled one by one into the dining-room. I do not doubt that Mrs. Jellyby had gone to bed, and got up in the usual manner, but she presented no appearance of having changed her dress. She was greatly occupied during breakfast; for the morning's post brought a large correspondence relative to Borrioboola-Gha, which would occasion her (she said) to pass a busy day. The children tumbled about, and notched memoranda of their accidents in their legs, which were perfect little calendars of distress; Peepy was lost for an hour and a half, and brought home from Newgate market by a policeman. The equable manner in which Mrs. Jellyby sustained all this absence, and his restoration to the family circle, surprised us all.

She was by that time perseveringly dictating to Caddy, and Caddy was fast getting into the inky condition in which we had found her. At one o'clock an open carriage arrived for us, and a cart for our luggage. Mrs. Jellyby charged us with many remembrances to her good friend, Mr. Jarndyce; Caddy left her desk to see us depart, kissed me in the passage, and stood, biting her pen, and sobbing on the steps; Peepy, I am happy to say, was asleep, and spared the pain of separation (I was not without misgivings that he had gone to Newgate market in search of me); and all the other children got up behind the barouche and fell off, which we saw them with great concern, scattered over the surface of Thavies Inn, as they filed out of its precincts.

CHAPTER VI.

QUITE AT HOME.

The day had brightened very much, and still brightened as we went westward. We went our way through the sunshine and the fresh air, wondering more and more at the extent of the streets, the brilliancy of the shops, the great traffic, and the crowds of people whom the pleasanter weather seemed to have brought out in many-coloured flowers. By-and-by we began to leave the wonderful city, and to proceed through suburbs which, of themselves, would have made a pretty large town, in my eyes; and at last we got into a real country road again, with hills, rickyards, milestones, farmers' waggons, scents of old hay, swinging signs and horse troughs: trees, fields, and hedgerows. It was delightful to see the green landscape before us, and the immense metropolis behind; and when a mail with a train of beautiful horses, furnished with red trappings and clear-ringing bells, came by us with its music, I believe we could all three have sung with the bells, so cheerful were the influences around.

"The whole road has been reminding me of my namesake Whittington," said Richard, "and that waggon is the finishing touch. Halloa! what's the matter?"

We had stopped, and the waggon had stopped too. Its music changed as the horses came to a stand, and subsided to a gentle tinkling, except when a horse tossed his head, or shook himself, and sprinkled off a little shower of bell-ringing.

"Our postilion is looking after the waggoner," said Richard; "and the waggoner is coming back after us. Good day, friend!" The waggoner was at our coach-door. "Why, here's an extraordinary thing!" added Richard, looking closely at the man. "He has got your name, Ada, in his hat!"

He had all our names in his hat. Tucked within the band were three small notes; one, addressed to Ada; one, to Richard; one, to me. These the waggoner delivered to each of us respectively, reading the name aloud first. In answer to Richard's inquiry from whom they came, he briefly answered, "Master, sir, if you please;" and putting on his hat again (which was like a soft bowl), cracked his whip, re-awakened his music, and went melodiously away.

"Is that Mr. Jarndyce's waggon?" said Richard, calling to our post-boy.

"Yes, sir," he replied. "Going to London."

We opened the notes. Each was a counterpart of the other, and contained these words, in a solid, plain hand.

"I look forward, my dear, to our meeting easily, and without constraint on either side. I therefore have to propose that we meet as old friends, and take the past for granted. It will be a relief to you possibly, and to me certainly, and so my love to you.

JOHN JARNDYCE."

I had perhaps less reason to be surprised than either of my companions, having never yet enjoyed an opportunity of thanking one who had been my benefactor and sole earthly dependence through so many years. I had not considered how I could thank him, my gratitude lying too deep in my heart for that; but I now began to consider how I could meet him without thanking him, and felt it would be very difficult indeed.

The notes revived, in Richard and Ada, a general impression that they both had, without quite knowing how they came by it, that their cousin Jarndyce could never bear acknowledgments for any kindness he performed, and that, sooner than receive any, he would resort to the most singular expedients and evasions, or would even run away. Ada dimly remembered to have heard her mother tell, when she was a very little child, that he had once done her an act of uncommon generosity, and that on her going to his house to thank him, he happened to see her through a window coming to the door, and immediately escaped by the back gate, and was not heard of for three months. This discourse led to a great deal more on the same theme, and indeed it lasted us all day, and we talked of scarcely anything else. If we did, by any chance, diverge into another subject, we soon returned to this; and wondered what the house would be like, and when we should get there, and whether we should see Mr. Jarndyce as soon as we arrived, or after a delay, and what he would say to us, and what we should say to him. All of which we wondered about, over and over again.

The roads were very heavy for the horses, but the pathway was generally good: so we alighted and walked up all the hills, and liked it so well that we prolonged our walk on the level ground when we got to the top. At Barnet there were other horses waiting for us; but as they had only just been fed, we had to wait for them too, and got a long fresh walk, over a common and an old battle-field, before the carriage came up. These delays so protracted the journey, that the short day was spent, and the long night had closed in, before we came to St. Albans; near to which town Bleak House was, we knew.

By that time we were so anxious and nervous, that even Richard confessed, as we rattled over the stones of the old street, to feeling an irrational desire to drive back again. As to Ada and me, whom he had wrapped up with great care, the night being sharp and frosty, we trembled from head to foot. When we turned out of the town, round a corner, and Richard told us that the post-boy, who had for a long time sympathised with our heightened expectation, was looking back and nodding, we both stood up in the carriage (Richard holding Ada, lest she should be jolted down), and gazed round upon the open country and the starlight night, for our destination. There was a light sparkling on the top of a hill before us, and the driver, pointing to it with his whip, and crying, "That's Bleak House!" put his horses into a canter, and took us forward at such a rate, up-hill though it was, that the wheels sent the road drift flying about our heads like spray from a water-mill. Presently we lost the light, presently saw it, presently lost it, presently saw it, and turned into an avenue of trees, and cantered up towards where it was beaming brightly. It was in a window of what seemed to be an old-fashioned house, with three peaks in the roof in front, and a circular sweep leading to the porch. A bell was rung as we drew up, and amidst the sound of its deep voice in the still air, and the distant barking of some dogs, and a gush of light from the opened door, and the smoking and steaming of the heated horses, and the quickened beating of our own hearts, we alighted in no inconsiderable confusion.

"Ada, my love, Esther, my dear, you are welcome. I rejoice to see you! Rick, if I had a hand to spare at present, I would give it you!"

The gentleman who said these words in a clear, bright, hospitable voice, had one of his arms round Ada's waist, and the other round mine, and kissed us both in a fatherly way, and bore us across the hall into a ruddy little room, all in a glow with a blazing fire. Here he kissed us again, and, opening his arms, made us sit down side by side, on a sofa ready drawn out near the hearth. I felt that if we had been at all demonstrative, he would have run away in a moment.

"Now, Rick!" said he, "I have a hand at liberty. A word in earnest is as good as a speech. I am heartily glad to see you. You are at home. Warm yourself!"

Richard shook him by both hands with an intuitive mixture of respect and frankness, and only saying (though with an earnestness that rather alarmed me, I was so afraid of Mr. Jarndyce's suddenly disappearing), "You are very kind, sir! We are very much obliged to you!" laid aside his hat and coat, and came up to the fire.

"And how did you like the ride? And how did you like Mrs. Jellyby, my dear?" said Mr. Jarndyce to Ada.

While Ada was speaking to him in reply, I glanced (I need not say with how much interest) at his face. It was a handsome, lively, quick face, full of change and motion; and his hair was a silvered iron-grey. I took him to be nearer sixty than fifty, but he was upright, hearty, and robust. From the moment of his first speaking to us, his voice had connected itself with an association in my mind that I could not define: but now, all at once, a something sudden in his manner, and a pleasant expression in his eyes, recalled the gentleman in the stage-coach, six years ago, on the memorable day of my journey to Reading. I was certain it was he. I never was so frightened in my life as when I made the discovery, for he caught my glance, and appearing to read my thoughts, gave such a look at the door that I thought we had lost him.

However, I am happy to say he remained where he was, and asked me what I thought of Mrs. Jellyby?

"She exerts herself very much for Africa, sir," I said.

"Nobly!" returned Mr. Jarndyce. "But you answer like Ada." Whom I had not heard. "You all think something else, I see."

"We rather thought," said I, glancing at Richard and Ada, who entreated me with their eyes to speak, "that perhaps she was a little unmindful of her home."

"Floored!" cried Mr. Jarndyce.

I was rather alarmed again.

"Well! I want to know your real thoughts, my dear. I may have sent you there on purpose."

"We thought that, perhaps," said I, hesitating, "it is right to begin with the obligations of home, sir; and that, perhaps, while those are overlooked and neglected, no other duties can possibly be substituted for them."

"The little Jellybys," said Richard, coming to my relief, "are really—I can't help expressing myself strongly, sir—in a devil of a state."

"She means well," said Mr. Jarndyce, hastily. "The wind's in the east."

"It was in the north, sir, as we came down," observed Richard.

"My dear Rick," said Mr. Jarndyce, poking the fire; "I'll take an oath it's either in the east, or going to be. I am always conscious of an uncomfortable sensation now and then when the wind is blowing in the east."

"Rheumatism, sir?" said Richard.

"I dare say it is, Rick. I believe it is. And so the little Jell—I had my doubts about 'em—are in a—oh, Lord, yes, it's easterly!" said Mr. Jarndyce.

He had taken two or three undecided turns up and down while uttering these broken sentences, retaining the poker in one hand and rubbing his hair with the other, with a good-natured vexation, at once so whimsical and so loveable, that I am sure we were more delighted with him than we could possibly have expressed in any words. He gave an arm to Ada and an arm to me, and bidding Richard bring a candle, was leading the way out, when he suddenly turned us all back again.

"Those little Jellybys. Couldn't you—didn't you—now, if it had rained sugar-plums, or three-cornered raspberry tarts, or anything of that sort!" said Mr. Jarndyce.

"O, cousin—!" Ada hastily began.

"Good, my pretty pet. I like cousin. Cousin John, perhaps, is better."

"Then, cousin John!——" Ada laughingly began again.

"Ha, ha! Very good indeed!" said Mr. Jarndyce, with great enjoyment. "Sounds uncommonly natural. Yes, my dear?"

"It did better than that. It rained Esther."

"Ay?" said Mr. Jarndyce. "What did Esther do?"

"Why, cousin John," said Ada, clasping her hands upon his arm, and shaking her head at me across him—for I wanted her to be quiet: "Esther was their friend directly. Esther nursed them, coaxed them to sleep, washed and dressed them, told them stories, kept them quiet, bought them keepsakes"—My dear girl! I had only gone out with Peepy, after he was found, and given him a little, tiny horse!—"and, cousin John, she softened poor Caroline, the eldest one, so much, and was so thoughtful for me and so amiable!—No, no, I won't be contradicted, Esther dear! You know, you know, it's true!"

The warm-hearted darling leaned across her cousin John, and kissed me; and then looking up in his face, boldly said, "At all events, cousin John, I *will* thank you for the companion you have given me." I felt as if she challenged him to run away. But he didn't.

"Where did you say the wind was, Rick?" asked Mr. Jarndyce.

"In the north, as we came down, sir."

u are right. There's no east in it. A mistake of mine. Come, girls, ad see your home!"

s one of those delightfully irregular houses where you go up and down ut of one room into another, and where you come upon more rooms when nk you have seen all there are, and where there is a bountiful provision of lls and passages, and where you find still older cottage-rooms in unex- places, with lattice windows and green growth pressing through them. which we entered first, was of this kind, with an up-and-down roof, that re corners in it than I ever counted afterwards, and a chimney (there was -fire on the hearth) paved all around with pure white tiles, in every one of bright miniature of the fire was blazing. Out of this room, you went wo steps, into a charming little sitting-room, looking down upon a flower- which room was henceforth to belong to Ada and me. Out of this you three steps, into Ada's bed-room, which had a fine broad window, com- g a beautiful view (we saw a great expanse of darkness lying underneath s), to which there was a hollow window-seat, in which, with a spring-lock, ear Adas might have been lost at once. Out of this room, you passed ittle gallery, with which the other best rooms (only two) communicated, by a little staircase of shallow steps, with a number of corner stairs in it, ring its length, down into the hall. But if, instead of going out at Ada's ou came back into my room, and went out at the door by which you had it, and turned up a few crooked steps that branched off in an unexpected from the stairs, you lost yourself in passages, with mangles in them, and rnered tables, and a Native-Hindoo chair, which was also a sofa, a box, edstead, and looked in every form, something between a bamboo skeleton reat bird-cage, and had been brought from India nobody knew by whom n. From these, you came on Richard's room, which was part library, part room, part bed-room, and seemed indeed a comfortable compound of many

Out of that, you went straight, with a little interval of passage, to the om where Mr. Jarndyce slept, all the year round, with his window open, stead without any furniture standing in the middle of the floor for more his cold-bath gaping for him in a smaller room adjoining. Out of that, ne into another passage, where there were back-stairs, and where you could e horses being rubbed down, outside the stable, and being told to Hold up, t over, as they slipped about very much on the uneven stones. Or you if you came out at another door (every room had at least two doors), go t down to the hall again by half-a-dozen steps and a low archway, wonder- w you got back there, or had ever got out of it.

furniture, old-fashioned rather than old, like the house, was as pleasantly ar. Ada's sleeping-room was all flowers—in chintz and paper, in velvet, in work, in the brocade of two stiff courtly chairs, which stood, each attended tle page of a stool for greater state, on either side of the fire-place. Our room was green; and had, framed and glazed, upon the walls, numbers of ng and surprised birds, staring out of pictures at a real trout in a case, as and shining as if it had been served with gravy; at the death of Captain and at the whole process of preparing tea in China, as depicted by Chinese

In my room there were oval engravings of the months—ladies haymaking, t waists, and large hats tied under the chin, for June—smooth-legged en, pointing, with cocked-hats, to village steeples, for October. Half- portraits, in crayons, abounded all through the house; but were so dis- that I found the brother of a youthful officer of mine in the china-closet, and y old age of my pretty *young bride*, with a flower in her bodice, in the st-room. *As substitutes, I had four* angels, of Queen Anne's reign, taking

were not at all his own affair, as if Skimpole were a third person, as if he knew that Skimpole had his singularities, but still had his claims too, which were the general business of the community and must not be slighted. He was quite enchanting. If I felt at all confused at that early time, in endeavouring to reconcile anything he said with anything I had thought about the duties and accountabilities of life (which I am far from sure of), I was confused by not exactly understanding why he was free of them. That he *was* free of them, I scarcely doubted; he was so very clear about it himself.

"I covet nothing," said Mr. Skimpole, in the same light way. "Possession is nothing to me. Here is my friend Jarndyce's excellent house. I feel obliged to him for possessing it. I can sketch it, and alter it. I can set it to music. When I am here, I have sufficient possession of it, and have neither trouble, cost, nor responsibility. My steward's name, in short, is Jarndyce, and he can't cheat me. We have been mentioning Mrs. Jellyby. There is a bright-eyed woman, of a strong will and immense power of business-detail, who throws herself into objects with surprising ardour! I don't regret that *I* have not a strong will and an immense power of business-detail, to throw myself into objects with surprising ardour. I can admire her without envy. I can sympathise with the objects. I can dream of them. I can lie down on the grass—in fine weather—and float along an African river, embracing all the natives I meet, as sensible of the deep silence, and sketching the dense overhanging tropical growth as accurately, as if I were there. I don't know that it's of any direct use my doing so, but it's all I can do, and I do it thoroughly. Then, for Heaven's sake, having Harold Skimpole, a confiding child, petitioning you, the world, an agglomeration of practical people of business habits, to let him live and admire the human family, do it somehow or other, like good souls, and suffer him to ride his rocking-horse!"

It was plain enough that Mr. Jarndyce had not been neglectful of the adjuration. Mr. Skimpole's general position there would have rendered it so, without the addition of what he presently said.

"It's only you, the generous creatures, whom I envy," said Mr. Skimpole addressing us, his new friends, in an impersonal manner. "I envy you your power of doing what you do. It is what I should revel in, myself. I don't feel any vulgar gratitude to you. I almost feel as if *you* ought to be grateful to *me*, for giving you the opportunity of enjoying the luxury of generosity. I know you like it. For anything I can tell, I may have come into the world expressly for the purpose of increasing your stock of happiness. I may have been born to be a benefactor to you, by sometimes giving you an opportunity of assisting me in my little perplexities. Why should I regret my incapacity for details and worldly affairs, when it leads to such pleasant consequences? I don't regret it therefore."

Of all his playful speeches (playful, yet always fully meaning what they expressed) none seemed to be more to the taste of Mr. Jarndyce than this. I had often new temptations, afterwards, to wonder whether it was really singular, or only singluar to me, that he, who was probably the most grateful of mankind upon the least occasion, should so desire to escape the gratitude of others.

We were all enchanted. I felt it a merited tribute to the engaging qualities of Ada and Richard, that Mr. Skimpole, seeing them for the first time, should be so unreserved, and should lay himself out to be so exquisitely agreeable. They (and especially Richard) were naturally pleased for similar reasons, and considered it no common privilege to be so freely confided in by such an attractive man. The more we listened, the more gaily Mr. Skimpole talked. And what with his fine hilarious manner, and his engaging candour, and his genial way of lightly tossing his own weaknesses about, as if he had said, "I am a child, you know! You are *designing* people compared with me;" (he really made me consider myself in

that light;) "but I am gay and innocent; forget your worldly arts and play with me!"—the effect was absolutely dazzling.

He was so full of feeling too, and had such a delicate sentiment for what was beautiful or tender, that he could have won a heart by that alone. In the evening when I was preparing to make tea, and Ada was touching the piano in the adjoining room and softly humming a tune to her cousin Richard, which they had happened to mention, he came and sat down on the sofa near me, and so spoke of Ada that I almost loved him.

"She is like the morning," he said. "With that golden hair, those blue eyes, and that fresh bloom on her cheek, she is like the summer morning. The birds here will mistake her for it. We will not call such a lovely young creature as that, who is a joy to all mankind, an orphan. She is the child of the universe."

Mr. Jarndyce, I found, was standing near us, with his hands behind him, and an attentive smile upon his face.

"The universe," he observed, "makes rather an indifferent parent, I am afraid."

"O! I don't know!" cried Mr. Skimpole, buoyantly.

"I think I do know," said Mr. Jarndyce.

"Well!" cried Mr. Skimpole, "you know the world (which in your sense is the universe), and I know nothing of it, so you shall have your way. But if I had mine," glancing at the cousins, "there should be no brambles of sordid realities in such a path as that. It should be strewn with roses: it should lie through bowers, where there was no spring, autumn, nor winter, but perpetual summer. Age or change should never wither it. The base word money should never be breathed near it!"

Mr. Jarndyce patted him on the head with a smile, as if he had been really a child; and passing a step or two on, and stopping a moment, glanced at the young cousins. His look was thoughtful, but had a benignant expression in it which I often (how often!) saw again: which has long been engraven on my heart. The room in which they were, communicating with that in which he stood, was only lighted by the fire. Ada sat at the piano; Richard stood beside her, bending down. Upon the wall, their shadows blended together, surrounded by strange forms, not without a ghostly motion caught from the unsteady fire, though reflecting from motionless objects. Ada touched the notes so softly, and sang so low, that the wind, sighing away to the distant hills, was as audible as the music. The mystery of the future, and the little clue afforded to it by the voice of the present, seemed expressed in the whole picture.

But it is not to recall this fancy, well as I remember it, that I recall the scene. First, I was not quite unconscious of the contrast in respect of meaning and intention, between the silent look directed that way, and the flow of words that had preceded it. Secondly, though Mr. Jarndyce's glance, as he withdrew it, rested for but a moment on me, I felt as if, in that moment, he confided to me—and knew that he confided to me, and that I received the confidence—his hope that Ada and Richard might one day enter on a dearer relationship.

Mr. Skimpole could play on the piano, and the violoncello; and he was a composer—had composed half an opera once, but got tired of it—and played what he composed with taste. After tea we had quite a little concert, in which Richard—who was enthralled by Ada's singing, and told me that she seemed to know all the songs that ever were written—and Mr. Jarndyce, and I, were the audience. After a little while I missed, first Mr. Skimpole, and afterwards Richard; and while I was thinking how could Richard stay away so long, and how so much, the maid who had given me the keys looked in at the door, saying, "If you please, miss, *could you spare a minute?*"

When I was shut out with her in the hall, she said, holding up her hands, "Oh if you please, miss, Mr. Carstone says would you come up-stairs to Mr. Skimpole's room. He has been took, miss!"

"Took?" said I.

"Took, miss. Sudden," said the maid.

I was apprehensive that his illness might be of a dangerous kind; but of course, I begged her to be quiet and not disturb any one; and collected myself, as I followed her quickly up-stairs, sufficiently to consider what were the best remedies to be applied if it should prove to be a fit. She threw open a door, and I went into a chamber; where, to my unspeakable surprise, instead of finding Mr. Skimpole stretched upon the bed, or prostrate on the floor, I found him standing before the fire smiling at Richard, while Richard, with a face of great embarrassment, looked at a person on the sofa, in a white great-coat, with smooth hair upon his head and not much of it, which he was wiping smoother, and making less of, with a pocket-handkerchief.

"Miss Summerson," said Richard, hurriedly, "I am glad you are come. You will be able to advise us. Our friend, Mr. Skimpole—don't be alarmed!—is arrested for debt."

"And, really, my dear Miss Summerson," said Mr. Skimpole, with his agreeable candour, "I never was in a situation, in which that excellent sense, and quiet habit of method and usefulness, which anybody must observe in you who has the happiness of being a quarter of an hour in your society, was more needed."

The person on the sofa, who appeared to have a cold in his head, gave such a very loud snort, that he startled me.

"Are you arrested for much, sir?" I inquired of Mr. Skimpole.

"My dear Miss Summerson," said he, shaking his head pleasantly, "I don't know. Some pounds, odd shillings, and half-pence, I think, were mentioned."

"It's twenty-four pound, sixteen, and seven-pence ha'penny," observed the stranger. "That's wot it is."

"And it sounds—somehow it sounds," said Mr. Skimpole, "like a small sum?"

The strange man said nothing, but made another snort. It was such a powerful one, that it seemed quite to lift him out of his seat.

"Mr. Skimpole," said Richard to me, "has a delicacy in applying to my cousin Jarndyce, because he has lately—I think, sir, I understood you that you had lately——"

"Oh, yes!" returned Mr. Skimpole, smiling. "Though I forgot how much it was, and when it was. Jarndyce would readily do it again; but I have the epicure-like feeling that I would prefer a novelty in help: that I would rather," and he looked at Richard and me, "develop generosity in a new soil, and in a new form of flower."

"What do you think will be best, Miss Summerson?" said Richard, aside.

I ventured to inquire, generally, before replying, what would happen if the money were not produced.

"Jail," said the strange man, coolly putting his handkerchief into his hat, which was on the floor at his feet. "Or Coavinses."

"May I ask sir, what is——"

"Coavinses?" said the strange man. "A 'ouse."

Richard and I looked at one another again. It was a most singular thing that the arrest was our embarrassment, and not Mr. Skimpole's. He observed us with a genial interest; but there seemed, if I may venture on such a contradiction, nothing selfish in it. He had entirely washed his hands of the difficulty, and it *had become ours.*

ought," he suggested, as if good-naturedly to help us out, "that being
n a Chancery suit concerning (as people say) a large amount of property,
dward or his beautiful cousin, or both, could sign something, or make over
ng, or give some sort of undertaking, or pledge, or bond? I don't know
e business name of it may be, but I suppose there is some instrument
heir power that would settle this?"
t a bit on it," said the strange man.
ally?" returned Mr. Skimpole. "That seems odd, now, to one who is
e of these things!"
l or even," said the stranger, gruffly, "I tell you, not a bit on it!"
ep your temper, my good fellow, keep your temper!" Mr. Skimpole
easoned with him, as he made a little drawing of his head on the fly-leaf
ok. "Don't be ruffled by your occupation. We can separate you from
ce; we can separate the individual from the pursuit. We are not so
ed as to suppose that in private life you are otherwise than a very esti-
nan, with a great deal of poetry in your nature, of which you may not be
s."
tranger only answered with another violent snort; whether in acceptance
oetry-tribute, or in disdainful rejection of it, he did not express to me.
, my dear Miss Summerson, and my dear Mr. Richard," said Mr. Skim-
ily, innocently, and confidingly, as he looked at his drawing with his head
ide; "here you see me utterly incapable of helping myself, and entirely
hands! I only ask to be free. The butterflies are free. Mankind will
ot deny to Harold Skimpole what it concedes to the butterflies!"
dear Miss Summerson," said Richard, in a whisper, "I have ten pounds
eceived from Mr. Kenge. I must try what that will do."
essed fifteen pounds, odd shillings, which I had saved from my quarterly
ce during several years. I had always thought that some accident might
which would throw me, suddenly, without any relation, or any property,
world; and had always tried to keep some little money by me, that I
ot be quite penniless. I told Richard of my having this little store, and
o present need of it; and I asked him delicately to inform Mr. Skimpole,
should be gone to fetch it, that we would have the pleasure of paying
.
I came back, Mr. Skimpole kissed my hand, and seemed quite
. Not on his own account (I was again aware of that perplexing and
inary contradiction), but on ours; as if personal considerations were im-
with him, and the contemplation of our happiness alone affected him.
, begging me, for the greater grace of the transaction, as he said, to
ith Coavinses (as Mr. Skimpole now jocularly called him), I counted out
ey and received the necessary acknowledgment. This, too, delighted Mr.
le.
ompliments were so delicately administered, that I blushed less than I
ave done; and settled with the stranger in the white coat, without making
takes. He put the money in his pocket, and shortly said, "Well, then,
you a good evening, miss."
friend," said Mr. Skimpole, standing with his back to the fire, after giving
sketch when it was half finished, "I should like to ask you something,
offence."
k the reply was, "Cut away, then!"
you know this morning, now, that you were coming out on this errand?"
Skimpole.
ow'd it *yes'day aft'noon at tea-time*," said Coavinses.

"It didn't affect your appetite? Didn't make you at all uneasy?"

"Not a bit," said Coavinses. "I know'd if you wos missed to-day, you wouldn't be missed to-morrow. A day makes no such odds."

"But when you came down here," proceeded Mr. Skimpole, "it was a fine day, The sun was shining, the wind was blowing, the lights and shadows were passing across the fields, the birds were singing."

"Nobody said they warn't, in *my* hearing," returned Coavinses.

"No," observed Mr. Skimpole. "But what did you think upon the road?"

"Wot do you mean?" growled Coavinses, with an appearance of strong resentment. "Think! I've got enough to do, and little enough to get for it, without thinking. Thinking!" (with profound contempt.)

"Then you didn't think, at all events," proceeded Mr. Skimpole, "to this effect. 'Harold Skimpole loves to see the sun shine; loves to hear the wind blow; loves to watch the changing lights and shadows; loves to hear the birds, those choristers in Nature's great cathedral. And does it seem to me that I am about to deprive Harold Skimpole of his share in such possessions, which are his only birthright!' You thought nothing to that effect?"

"I—certainly—did—NOT," said Coavinses, whose doggedness in utterly renouncing the idea was of that intense kind, that he could only give adequate expression to it by putting a long interval between each word, and accompanying the last with a jerk that might have dislocated his neck.

"Very odd and very curious, the mental process is, in you men of business!" said Mr. Skimpole, thoughtfully. "Thank you, my friend, Good night."

As our absence had been long enough already to seem strange down-stairs, I returned at once, and found Ada sitting at work by the fireside talking to her cousin John. Mr. Skimpole presently appeared, and Richard shortly after him. I was sufficiently engaged, during the remainder of the evening, in taking my first lesson in backgammon from Mr. Jarndyce, who was very fond of the game, and from whom I wished of course to learn it as quickly as I could, in order that I might be of the very small use of being able to play when he had no better adversary. But I thought, occasionally when Mr. Skimpole played some fragments of his own compositions; or when, both at the piano and the violoncello, and at our table, he preserved, with an absence of all effort, his delightful spirits and his easy flow of conversation; that Richard and I seemed to retain the transferred impression of having been arrested since dinner, and that it was very curious altogether.

It was late before we separated: for when Ada was going at eleven o'clock, Mr. Skimpole went to the piano, and rattled, hilariously, that the best of all ways, to lengthen our days, was to steal a few hours from Night, my dear! It was past twelve before he took his candle and his radiant face out of the room; and I think he might have kept us there, if he had seen fit, until daybreak. Ada and Richard were lingering for a few moments by the fire, wondering whether Mrs. Jellyby had yet finished her dictation for the day, when Mr. Jarndyce, who had been out of the room, returned.

"Oh, dear me, what's this, what's this!" he said, rubbing his head and walking about with his good-humoured vexation. "What's this they tell me? Rick, my boy, Esther, my dear, what have you been doing? Why did you do it? How could you do it? How much apiece was it?—The wind's round again. I feel it all over me!"

We neither of us quite knew what to answer.

"Come, Rick, come! I must settle this before I sleep. How much are you out of pocket? You two made the money up, you know! Why did you? How could you?—O Lord, yes, it's due east—must be!"

"Really, sir," said Richard, "I don't think it would be honourable in me to tell you. Mr. Skimpole relied upon us—"

"Lord bless you, my dear boy! He relies upon everybody!" said Mr. Jarndyce, giving his head a great rub, and stopping short.

"Indeed, sir?"

"Everybody! And he'll be in the same scrape again, next week!" said Mr. Jarndyce, walking again at a great pace, with a candle in his hand that had gone out. "He's always in the same scrape. He was born in the same scrape. I verily believe that the announcement in the newspapers when his mother was confined, was 'On Tuesday last, at her residence in Botheration Buildings, Mrs. Skimpole of a son in difficulties.'"

Richard laughed heartily, but added, "Still, sir, I don't want to shake his confidence, or to break his confidence; and if I submit to your better knowledge again, that I ought to keep his secret, I hope you will consider before you press me any more. Of course, if you do press me, sir, I shall know I am wrong, and will tell you."

"Well!" cried Mr. Jarndyce, stopping again, and making several absent endeavours to put his candlestick in his pocket. "I—here! Take it away, my dear. I don't know what I am about with it; it's all the wind—invariably has that effect—I won't press you, Rick; you may be right. But really—to get hold of you and Esther—and to squeeze you like a couple of tender young Saint Michael's oranges!—It'll blow a gale in the course of the night!"

He was now alternately putting his hands into his pockets, as if he were going to keep them there a long time: and taking them out again, and vehemently rubbing them all over his head.

I ventured to take this opportunity of hinting that Mr. Skimpole, being in all such matters, quite a child—

"Eh, my dear?" said Mr. Jarndyce, catching at the word.

"—Being quite a child, sir," said I, "and so different from other people——"

"You are right!" said Mr. Jarndyce, brightening. "Your woman's wit hits the mark. He is a child—an absolute child. I told you he was a child, you know, when I first mentioned him."

Certainly! certainly! we said.

"And he *is* a child. Now, isn't he?" asked Mr. Jarndyce, brightening more and more.

He was indeed, we said.

"When you come to think of it, it's the height of childishness in you—I mean me—" said Mr. Jarndyce, "to regard him for a moment as a man. You can't make *him* responsible. The idea of Harold Skimpole with designs or plans, or knowledge of consequences! Ha, ha, ha!"

It was so delicious to see the clouds about his bright face clearing, and to see him so heartily pleased, and to know, as it was impossible not to know, that the source of his pleasure was the goodness which was tortured by condemning, or mistrusting, or secretly accusing any one, that I saw the tears in Ada's eyes, while she echoed his laugh, and felt them in my own.

"Why, what a cod's head and shoulders I am," said Mr. Jarndyce, "to require reminding of it! The whole business shows the child from beginning to end. Nobody but a child would have thought of singling *you* two out for parties in the affair! Nobody but a child would have thought of *your* having the money! If it had been a thousand pounds, it would have been just the same!" said Mr. Jarndyce, with his whole face in a glow.

We all confirmed it from our night's experience.

"To be sure, to be sure!" said Mr. Jarndyce. "However, Rick, Esther, and

you too, Ada, for I don't know that even your little purse is safe from his inexperience—I must have a promise all round, that nothing of this sort shall ever be done any more. No advances! Not even sixpences."

We all promised faithfully; Richard, with a merry glance at me, touching his pocket, as if to remind me that there was no danger of *our* transgressing.

"As to Skimpo'e," said Mr. Jarndyce, "a habitable doll's house, with good board, and a few tin people to get into debt with and borrow money of, would set the boy up in life. He is in a child's sleep by this time, I suppose; it's time I should take my craftier head to my more worldly pillow. Good night, my dears. God bless you!"

He peeped in again, with a smiling face, before we had lighted our candles, and said, "O! I have been looking at the weather-cock. I find it was a false alarm about the wind. It's in the south!" And went away singing to himself.

Ada and I agreed, as we talked together for a little while up-stairs, that this caprice about the wind was a fiction; and that he used the pretence to account for any disappointment he could not conceal, rather than he would blame the real cause of it, or disparage or depreciate any one. We thought this very characteristic of his eccentric gentleness; and of the difference between him and those petulant people who make the weather and the winds (particularly that unlucky wind which he had chosen for such a different purpose) the stalking-horses of their splenetic and gloomy humours.

Indeed, so much affection for him had been added in this one evening to my gratitude, that I hoped I already began to understand him through that mingled feeling. Any seeming inconsistencies in Mr. Skimpole, or in Mrs. Jellyby, I could not expect to be able to reconcile; having so little experience or practical knowledge. Neither did I try; for my thoughts were busy when I was alone, with Ada and Richard, and with the confidence I had seemed to receive concerning them. My fancy, made a little wild by the wind perhaps, would not consent to be all unselfish, either, though I would have persuaded it to be so if I could. It wandered back to my godmother's house, and came along the intervening track, raising up shadowy speculations which had sometimes trembled there in the dark, as to what knowledge Mr. Jarndyce had of my earliest history—even as to the possibility of his being my father—though that idle dream was quite gone now.

It was all gone now, I remembered, getting up from the fire. It was not for me to muse over bygones, but to act with a cheerful spirit and a grateful heart. So I said to myself, "Esther, Esther, Esther! Duty, my dear!" and gave my little basket of housekeeping keys such a shake, that they sounded like little bells, and rang me hopefully to bed.

CHAPTER VII.

THE GHOST'S WALK.

WHILE Esther sleeps, and while Esther wakes, it is still wet weather down at the place in Lincolnshire. The rain is ever falling, drip, drip, drip, by day and night, upon the broad flagged terrace-pavement, The Ghost's Walk. The weather is so very bad, down in Lincolnshire, that the liveliest imagination can scarcely apprehend its ever being fine again. Not that there is any superabundant life of imagination on the spot, for Sir Leicester is not here (and, truly, even if he were, would not do much for it in that particular), but is in Paris, with my Lady; and solitude, with dusky wings, sits brooding upon Chesney Wold.

may be some motions of fancy among the lower animals at Chesney
The horses in the stables—the long stables in a barren, red-brick court-
re there is a great bell in a turret, and a clock with a large face, which
s who live near it, and who love to perch upon its shoulders, seem to
consulting—*they* may contemplate some mental pictures of fine
n occasions, and may be better artists at them than the grooms. The
o famous for cross-country work, turning his large eyeball to the grated
ear his rack, may remember the fresh leaves that glisten there at other
l the scents that stream in, and may have a fine run with the hounds.
human helper, clearing out the next stall, never stirs beyond his pitchfork
-broom. The grey, whose place is opposite the door, and who, with an
rattle of his halter, pricks his ears and turns his head so wistfully when
d, and to whom the opener says, "Woa grey, then, steady! Noabody
to-day!" may know it quite as well as the man. The whole seemingly
s and uncompanionable half-dozen, stabled together, may pass the long
, when the door is shut, in livelier communication than is held in the
all, or at the Dedlock Arms;—or may even beguile the time by improv-
ps corrupting) the pony in the loose-box in the corner.
mastiff, dozing in his kennel, in the courtyard, with his large head on his
think of the hot sunshine, when the shadows of the stable-buildings
atience out by changing, and leave him, at one time of the day, no
efuge than the shadow of his own house, where he sits on end, panting
ing short, and very much wanting something to worry, besides himself
ain. So, now, half-waking and all-winking, he may recall the house full
y, the coach-houses full of vehicles, the stables full of horses, and the
ngs full of attendants upon horses, until he is undecided about the present,
forth to see how it is. Then, with that impatient shake of himself, he
l in the spirit, "Rain, rain, rain! Nothing but rain—and no family
he goes in again, and lies down with a gloomy yawn.
the dogs in the kennel-buildings across the park, who have their rest-
nd whose doleful voices, when the wind has been very obstinate, have
e it known in the house itself: up-stairs, down-stairs, and in my lady's
They may hunt the whole country-side, while the raindrops are pat-
nd their inactivity. So the rabbits with their self-betraying tails, frisking
t of holes at roots of trees, may be lively with ideas of the breezy days
ir ears are blown about, or of those seasons of interest when there are
ng plants to gnaw. The turkey in the poultry-yard, always troubled
ss-grievance (probably Christmas), may be reminiscent of that summer-
wrongfully taken from him, when he got into the lane among the felled
re there was a barn and barley. The discontented goose, who stoops to
r the old gateway, twenty feet high, may gabble out, if we only knew it,
g preference for weather when the gateway casts its shadow on the

as it may, there is not much fancy otherwise stirring at Chesney Wold.
e a little at any odd moment, it goes, like a little noise in that old echoing
ng way, and usually leads off to ghosts and mystery.
rained so hard and rained so long, down in Lincolnshire, that Mrs.
ell, the old housekeeper at Chesney Wold, has several times taken off her
and cleaned them, to make certain that the drops were not upon the
Mrs. Rouncewell might have been sufficiently assured by hearing the
hat she is rather deaf, which nothing will induce her to believe. She is a
dy, handsome, stately, *wonderfully* neat, and has such a back and such a
, *that if her stays should turn out* when she dies to have been a broad

old-fashioned family fire-grate, nobody who knows her would have cause to be surprised. Weather affects Mrs. Rouncewell little. The house is there in all weathers, and the house, as she expresses it, "is what she looks at." She sits in her room (in a side passage on the ground floor, with an arched window commanding a smooth quadrangle, adorned at regular intervals with smooth round trees and smooth round blocks of stone, as if the trees were going to play at bowls with the stones), and the whole house reposes on her mind. She can open it on occasion, and be busy and fluttered; but it is shut-up now, and lies on the breadth of Mrs. Rouncewell's iron-bound bosom, in a majestic sleep.

It is the next difficult thing to an impossibility to imagine Chesney Wold without Mrs. Rouncewell, but she has only been here fifty years. Ask her how long, this rainy day, and she shall answer "fifty year three months and a fortnight, by the blessing of Heaven, if I live till Tuesday." Mr. Rouncewell died some time before the decease of the pretty fashion of pig-tails, and modestly hid his own (if he took it with him) in a corner of the churchyard in the park, near the mouldy porch. He was born in the market-town, and so was his young widow. Her progress in the family began in the time of the last Sir Leicester, and originated in the still-room.

The present representative of the Dedlocks is an excellent master. He supposes all his dependants to be utterly bereft of individual characters, intentions, or opinions, and is persuaded that he was born to supersede the necessity of their having any. If he were to make a discovery to the contrary, he would be simply stunned—would never recover himself, most likely, except to gasp and die. But he is an excellent master still, holding it a part of his state to be so. He has a great liking for Mrs. Rouncewell; he says she is a most respectable, creditable woman. He always shakes hands with her, when he comes down to Chesney Wold, and when he goes away; and if he were very ill, or if he were knocked down by accident, or run over, or placed in any situation expressive of a Dedlock at a disadvantage, he would say if he could speak, "Leave me, and send Mrs. Rouncewell here!" feeling his dignity, at such a pass, safer with her than with anybody else.

Mrs. Rouncewell has known trouble. She has had two sons, of whom the younger ran wild, and went for a soldier, and never came back. Even to this hour, Mrs. Rouncewell's calm hands lose their composure when she speaks of him, and unfolding themselves from her stomacher, hover about her in an agitated manner, as she says, what a likely lad, what a fine lad, what a gay, good-humoured, clever lad he was! Her second son would have been provided for at Chesney Wold, and would have been made steward in due season; but he took, when he was a schoolboy, to constructing steam-engines out of saucepans, and setting birds to draw their own water, with the least possible amount of labour; so assisting them with artful contrivance of hydraulic pressure, that a thirsty canary had only, in a literal sense, to put his shoulder to the wheel, and the job was done. This propensity gave Mrs. Rouncewell great uneasiness. She felt it with a mother's anguish, to be a move in the Wat Tyler direction: well knowing that Sir Leicester had that general impression of an aptitude for any art to which smoke and a tall chimney might be considered essential. But the doomed young rebel (otherwise a mild youth, and very persevering), showing no sign of grace as he got older; but, on the contrary, constructing a model of a power-loom, she was fain, with many tears, to mention his backslidings to the baronet. "Mrs. Rouncewell," said Sir Leicester, "I can never consent to argue, as you know, with any one on any subject. You had better get rid of your boy; you had better get him into some Works. The iron country farther north is, I suppose, the congenial direction *for a boy* with these tendencies." Farther north he went, and farther north he

and if Sir Leicester Dedlock ever saw him, when he came to Chesney visit his mother, or ever thought of him afterwards, it is certain that he rded him as one of a body of some odd thousand conspirators, swarthy who were in the habit of turning out by torchlight, two or three nights ek, for unlawful purposes.

ieless Mrs. Rouncewell's son has, in the course of nature and art, grown stablished himself, and married, and called unto him Mrs. Rouncewell's who, being out of his apprenticeship, and home from a journey in far whither he was sent to enlarge his knowledge and complete his prepara- the venture of this life, stands leaning against the chimney-piece this in Mrs. Rouncewell's room at Chesney Wold.

again and again, I am glad to see you, Watt! And, once again, I am e you, Watt!" says Mrs. Rouncewell. "You are a fine young fellow. ike your poor uncle George. Ah!" Mrs. Rouncewell's hands unquiet, on this reference.

say I am like my father, grandmother."

him, also, my dear,—but most like your poor uncle George! And your r." Mrs. Rouncewell folds her hands again. "He is well?"

ing, grandmother, in every way."

thankful!" Mrs. Rouncewell is fond of her son, but has a plaintive wards him—much as if he were a very honourable soldier, who had gone e enemy.

quite happy?" says she.

"

thankful! So he has brought you up to follow in his ways, and has nto foreign countries and the like? Well, he knows best. There may d beyond Chesney Wold that I don't understand. Though I am not ther. And I have seen a quantity of good company too!"

mother," says the young man, changing the subject, "what a very that was, I found with you just now. You called her Rosa?"

child. She is daughter of a widow in the village. Maids are so hard to w-a-days, that I have put her about me young. She's an apt scholar, lo well. She shows the house already, very pretty. She lives with me le here."

e I have not driven her away?"

upposes we have family affairs to speak about, I dare say. She is very It is a fine quality in a young woman. And scarcer," says Mrs. Rounce- nding her stomacher to its utmost limits, "than it formerly was!"

ung man inclines his head, in acknowledgment of the precepts of ex- Mrs. Rouncewell listens.

els!" says she. They have long been audible to the younger ears of her n. "What wheels on such a day as this, for gracious sake?"

short interval a tap at the door. "Come in!" A dark-eyed, dark- y, village beauty comes in—so fresh in her rosy and yet delicate bloom, drops of rain, which have beaten on her hair, look like the dew upon a sh gathered.

t company is this, Rosa?" says Mrs. Rouncewell.

wo young men in a gig, ma'am, who want to see the house—yes, and if e, I told them so!" in quick reply to a gesture of dissent from the house- " I went to the hall-door, and told them it was the wrong day, and the ar; but the young man who was driving took off his hat in the wet, and e to bring this card to you."

it, my dear Watt," *says the housekeeper.*

Rosa is so shy as she gives it to him, that they drop it between them, and almost knock their foreheads together as they pick it up. Rosa is shyer than before.

"Mr. Guppy" is all the information the card yields.

"Guppy!" repeats Mrs. Rouncewell. "*Mr.* Guppy! Nonsense, I never heard of him!"

"If you please, he told *me* that!" says Rosa. "But he said that he and the other young gentleman came from London only last night by the mail, on business at the magistrates' meeting, ten miles off, this morning; and that as their business was soon over, and they had heard a great deal said of Chesney Wold, and really didn't know what to do with themselves, they had come through the wet to see it. They are lawyers. He says he is not in Mr. Tulkinghorn's office, but he is sure he may make use of Mr. Tulkinghorn's name, if necessary." Finding, now she leaves off, that she has been making quite a long speech, Rosa is shyer than ever.

Now, Mr. Tulkinghorn is, in a manner, part and parcel of the place; and, besides, is supposed to have made Mrs. Rouncewell's will. The old lady relaxes, consents to the admission of the visitors as a favour, and dismisses Rosa. The grandson, however, being smitten by a sudden wish to see the house himself, proposes to join the party. The grandmother, who is pleased that he should have that interest, accompanies him—though to do him justice, he is exceedingly unwilling to trouble her.

"Much obliged to you, ma'am!" says Mr. Guppy, divesting himself of his wet dreadnought in the hall. "Us London lawyers don't often get an out; and when we do, we like to make the most of it, you know."

The old housekeeper, with a gracious severity of deportment, waves her hand towards the great staircase. Mr. Guppy and his friend follow Rosa, Mrs. Rouncewell and her grandson follow them, a young gardener goes before to open the shutters.

As is usually the case with people who go over houses, Mr. Guppy and his friend are dead beat before they have well begun. They straggle about in wrong places, look at wrong things, don't care for the right things, gape when more rooms are opened, exhibit profound depression of spirits, and are clearly knocked up. In each successive chamber that they enter, Mrs. Rouncewell, who is as upright as the house itself, rests apart in a window-seat, or other such nook, and listens with stately approval to Rosa's exposition. Her grandson is so attentive to it, that Rosa is shyer than ever—and prettier. Thus they pass on from room to room, raising the pictured Dedlocks for a few brief minutes as the young gardener admits the light, and reconsigning them to their graves as he shuts it out again. It appears to the afflicted Mr. Guppy and his inconsolable friend, that there is no end to the Dedlocks, whose family greatness seems to consist in their never having done anything to distinguish themselves, for seven hundred years.

Even the long drawing-room of Chesney Wold cannot revive Mr. Guppy's spirits. He is so low that he droops on the threshold, and has hardly strength of mind to enter. But a portrait over the chimney-piece, painted by the fashionable artist of the day, acts upon him like a charm. He recovers in a moment. He stares at it with uncommon interest; he seems to be fixed and fascinated by it.

"Dear me!" says Mr. Guppy. "Who's that?"

"The picture over the fire-place," says Rosa, "is the portrait of the present Lady Dedlock. It is considered a perfect likeness, and the best work of the master."

"'Blest!" says Mr. Guppy, staring in a kind of dismay at his friend, "if I can ever have seen her. Yet I know her! Has the picture been engraved, miss?"

"The picture has never been engraved. Sir Leicester has always refused permission."

"Well!" says Mr. Guppy in a low voice, "I'll be shot if it ain't very curious how well I know that picture! So that's Lady Dedlock, is it!"

"The picture on the right is the present Sir Leicester Dedlock. The picture on the left is his father, the late Sir Leicester."

Mr. Guppy has no eyes for either of these magnates. "It's unaccountable to me," he says, still staring at the portrait, "how well I know that picture! I'm dashed!" adds Mr. Guppy, looking round, "if I don't think I must have had a dream of that picture, you know!"

As no one present takes any especial interest in Mr. Guppy's dreams, the probability is not pursued. But he still remains so absorbed by the portrait, that he stands immoveable before it until the young gardener has closed the shutters; when he comes out of the room in a dazed state, that is an odd though a sufficient substitute for interest, and follows into the succeeding rooms with a confused stare, as if he were looking everywhere for Lady Dedlock again.

He sees no more of her. He sees her rooms, which are the last shown, as being very elegant, and he looks out of the windows from which she looked out, not long ago, upon the weather that bored her to death. All things have an end—even houses that people take infinite pains to see, and are tired of before they begin to see them. He has come to the end of the sight, and the fresh village beauty to the end of her description; which is always this:

"The terrace below is much admired. It is called, from an old story in the family, The Ghost's Walk."

"No?" says Mr. Guppy, greedily curious; "what's the story, miss? Is it anything about a picture?"

"Pray tell us the story," says Watt, in a half whisper.

"I don't know it, sir." Rosa is shyer than ever.

"It is not related to visitors; it is almost forgotten," says the housekeeper, advancing. "It has never been more than a family anecdote."

"You'll excuse my asking again if it has anything to do with a picture, ma'am," observes Mr. Guppy, "because I do assure you that the more I think of that picture the better I know it, without knowing how I know it!"

The story has nothing to do with a picture; the housekeeper can guarantee that. Mr. Guppy is obliged to her for the information; and is, moreover, generally obliged. He retires with his friend, guided down another staircase by the young gardener; and presently is heard to drive away. It is now dusk. Mrs. Rouncewell can trust to the discretion of her two young hearers, and may tell *them* how the terrace came to have that ghostly name. She seats herself in a large chair by the fast-darkening window, and tells them:

"In the wicked days, my dears, of King Charles the First—I mean, of course, in the wicked days of the rebels who leagued themselves against that excellent King—Sir Morbury Dedlock was the owner of Chesney Wold. Whether there was any account of a ghost in the family before those days, I can't say. I should think it very likely indeed."

Mrs. Rouncewell holds this opinion, because she considers that a family of such antiquity and importance has a right to a ghost. She regards a ghost as one of the privileges of the upper classes; a genteel distinction to which the common people have no claim.

"Sir Morbury Dedlock," says Mrs. Rouncewell, "was, I have no occasion to say, on the side of the blessed martyr. But it *is* supposed that his Lady, who had none of the family blood in her veins, favoured the bad cause. It is said that she had relations among King Charles's enemies; that she was in correspondence

with them; and that she gave them information. When any of the country gentlemen who followed His Majesty's cause met here, it is said that my Lady was always nearer to the door of their council-room than they supposed. Do you hear a sound like a footstep passing along the terrace, Watt?"

Rosa draws nearer to the housekeeper.

"I hear the rain-drip on the stones," replies the young man, "and I hear a curious echo—I suppose an echo—which is very like a halting step."

The housekeeper gravely nods and continues:

"Partly on account of this division between them, and partly on other accounts, Sir Morbury and his Lady led a troubled life. She was a lady of a haughty temper. They were not well suited to each other in age or character, and they had no children to moderate between them. After her favourite brother, a young gentleman, was killed in the civil wars (by Sir Morbury's near kinsman), her feeling was so violent that she hated the race into which she had married. When the Dedlocks were about to ride out from Chesney Wold in the King's cause, she is supposed to have more than once stolen down into the stables in the dead of night, and lamed their horses: and the story is, that once, at such an hour, her husband saw her gliding down the stairs and followed her into the stall where his own favourite horse stood. There he seized her by the wrist; and in a struggle or in a fall, or through the horse being frightened and lashing out, she was lamed in the hip, and from that hour began to pine away."

The housekeeper has dropped her voice to a little more than a whisper.

"She had been a lady of a handsome figure and a noble carriage. She never complained of the change; she never spoke to any one of being crippled, or of being in pain; but, day by day, she tried to walk upon the terrace; and with the help of the stone balustrade, went up and down, up and down, up and down, in sun and shadow, with greater difficulty every day. At last, one afternoon, her husband (to whom she had never, on any persuasion, opened her lips since that night), standing at the great south window, saw her drop upon the pavement. He hastened down to raise her, but she repulsed him as he bent over her, and looking at him fixedly and coldly, said 'I will die here where I have walked. And I will walk here, though I am in my grave. I will walk here, until the pride of this house is humbled. And when calamity, or when disgrace is coming to it, let the Dedlocks listen for my step!'"

Watt looks at Rosa. Rosa in the deepening gloom looks down upon the ground, half frightened and half shy.

"There and then she died. And from those days," says Mrs. Rouncewell, "the name has come down—The Ghost's Walk. If the tread is an echo, it is an echo that is only heard after dark, and is often unheard for a long while together. But it comes back, from time to time; and so sure as there is sickness or death in the family, it will be heard then."

"—And disgrace, grandmother—" says Watt.

"Disgrace never comes to Chesney Wold," returns the housekeeper.

Her grandson apologises, with "True. True."

"That is the story. Whatever the sound is, it is a worrying sound," says Mrs. Rouncewell, getting up from her chair, "and what is to be noticed in it, is, that it *must be heard*. My lady, who is afraid of nothing, admits that when it is there, it must be heard. You cannot shut it out. Watt, there is a tall French clock behind you (placed there, 'a purpose) that has a loud beat when it is in motion, and can play music. You understand how those things are managed?"

"Pretty well, grandmother, I think."

"Set it a-going."

Watt sets it a going—music and all.

ur, come hither," says the housekeeper. "Hither, child, towards my Lady's
I am not sure that it is dark enough yet, but listen! Can you hear the
upon the terrace, through the music, and the beat, and everything?"
ertainly can!"
my Lady says."

CHAPTER VIII.

COVERING A MULTITUDE OF SINS.

interesting when I dressed before daylight, to peep out of window,
my candles were reflected in the black panes like two beacons, and, finding
ound still enshrouded in the indistinctness of last night, to watch how it
out when the day came on. As the prospect gradually revealed itself, and
ed the scene over which the wind had wandered in the dark, like my
y over my life, I had a pleasure in discovering the unknown objects that
en around me in my sleep. At first they were faintly discernible in the
nd above them the later stars still glimmered. That pale interval over, the
began to enlarge and fill up so fast, that, at every new peep, I could have
enough to look at for an hour. Imperceptibly, my candles became the only
rams part of the morning, the dark places in my room all melted away, and
y shone bright upon a cheerful landscape, prominent in which the old
Church, with its massive tower, threw a softer train of shadow on the view
eemed compatible with its rugged character. But so from rough outsides
I have learnt), serene and gentle influences often proceed.
y part of the house was in such order, and every one was so attentive to me,
had no trouble with my two bunches of keys: though what with trying to
ber the contents of each little store-room drawer, and cupboard; and what
aking notes on a slate about jams, and pickles, and preserves, and bottles,
lass, and china, and a great many other things; and what with being
lly a methodical, old-maidish sort of foolish little person; I was so busy that
I not believe it was breakfast-time when I heard the bell ring. Away I ran,
r, and made tea, as I had already been installed into the responsibility of
apot; and then, as they were all rather late, and nobody was down yet, I
t I would take a peep at the garden and get some knowledge of that too.
I it quite a delightful place; in front, the pretty avenue and drive by which
I approached (and where, by-the-bye, we had cut up the gravel so terribly
ur wheels that I asked the gardener to roll it); at the back, the flower-
, with my darling at her window up there, throwing it open to smile out at
if she would have kissed me from that distance. Beyond the flower-garden
kitchen-garden, and then a paddock, and then a snug little rick-yard, and
dear little farm-yard. As to the House itself, with its three peaks in the
s various-shaped windows, some so large, some so small, and all so pretty;
is-work, against the south-front for roses and honey-suckle, and its homely,
table, welcoming look: it was, as Ada said, when she came out to meet
h her arm through that of its master, worthy of her cousin John—a bold
o say, though he only pinched her dear cheek for it.
Skimpole was as agreeable at breakfast, as he had been over-night. There
ney on the table, *and it led him into* a discourse about Bees. He had no

objection to honey, he said (and I should think he had not, for he seemed to like it), but he protested against the overweening assumptions of Bees. He didn't at all see why the busy Bee should be proposed as a model to him; he supposed the Bee liked to make honey, or he wouldn't do it—nobody asked him. It was not necessary for the Bee to make such a merit of his tastes. If every confectioner went buzzing about the world, banging against everything that came in his way, and egotistically calling upon everybody to take notice that he was going to his work and must not be interrupted, the world would be quite an unsupportable place. Then, after all, it was a ridiculous position, to be smoked out of your fortune with brimstone, as soon as you had made it. You would have a very mean opinion of a Manchester man, if he spun cotton for no other purpose. He must say he thought a Drone the embodiment of a pleasanter and wiser idea. The Drone said, unaffectedly, "You will excuse me; I really cannot attend to the shop! I find myself in a world in which there is so much to see, and so short a time to see it in, that I must take the liberty of looking about me, and begging to be provided for by somebody who doesn't want to look about him." This appeared to Mr. Skimpole to be the Drone philosophy, and he thought it a very good philosophy—always supposing the Drone to be willing to be on good terms with the Bee: which, so far as he knew, the easy fellow always was, if the consequential creature would only let him, and not be so conceited about his honey!

He pursued this fancy with the lightest foot over a variety of ground, and made us all merry: though again he seemed to have as serious a meaning in what he said as he was capable of having. I left them still listening to him, when I withdrew to attend to my new duties. They had occupied me for some time, and I was passing through the passages on my return with my basket of keys on my arm, when Mr. Jarndyce called me into a small room next his bed-chamber, which I found to be in part a little library of books and papers, and in part quite a little museum of his boots and shoes, and hat-boxes.

"Sit down, my dear," said Mr. Jarndyce. "This, you must know, is the Growlery. When I am out of humour, I come and growl here."

"You must be here very seldom, sir," said I.

"O, you don't know me!" he returned. "When I am deceived or disappointed in—the wind, and it's Easterly, I take refuge here. The Growlery is the best-used room in the house. You are not aware of half my humours yet. My dear, how you are trembling!"

I could not help it: I tried very hard: but being alone with that benevolent presence, and meeting his kind eyes, and feeling so happy, and so honoured there, and my heart so full——

I kissed his hand. I don't know what I said, or even that I spoke. He was disconcerted, and walked to the window; I almost believed with an intention of jumping out, until he turned, and I was reassured by seeing in his eyes what he had gone there to hide. He gently patted me on the head, and I sat down.

"There! There!" he said. "That's over. Pooh! Don't be foolish."

"It shall not happen again, sir," I returned, "but at first it is difficult"——

"Nonsense!" he said, "it's easy, easy. Why not? I hear of a good little orphan girl without a protector, and I take it into my head to be that protector. She grows up, and more than justifies my good opinion, and I remain her guardian and her friend. What is there in all this? So, so! Now, we have cleared off old scores, and I have before me thy pleasant, trusting, trusty face again."

I said to myself, "Esther, my dear, you surprise me! This really is not what I expected of you!" and it had such a good effect, that I folded my hands upon my basket and quite recovered myself. Mr. Jarndyce, expressing his approval in his

face, began to talk to me as confidentially as if I had been in the habit of conversing with him every morning for I don't know how long. I almost felt as if I had.

"Of course, Esther," he said, "you don't understand this Chancery business?"

And of course I shook my head.

"I don't know who does," he returned. "The Lawyers have twisted it into such a state of bedevilment that the original merits of the case have long disappeared from the face of the earth. It's about a Will, and the trusts under a Will—or it was, once. It's about nothing but Costs, now. We are always appearing, and disappearing, and swearing, and interrogating, and filing, and cross-filing, and arguing, and scaling, and motioning, and referring, and reporting, and revolving about the Lord Chancellor and all his satellites, and equitably waltzing ourselves off to dusty death, about Costs. That's the great question. All the rest, by some extraordinary means, has melted away."

"But it was, sir," said I, to bring him back, for he began to rub his head, "about a Will?"

"Why, yes, it was about a Will when it was about anything," he returned. "A certain Jarndyce, in an evil hour, made a great fortune, and made a great Will. In the question how the trusts under that Will are to be administered, the fortune left by the Will is squandered away; the legatees under the Will are reduced to such a miserable condition that they would be sufficiently punished, if they had committed an enormous crime in having money left them; and the Will itself is made a dead letter. All through the deplorable cause, everything that everybody in it, except one man, knows already, is referred to that only one man who don't know it, to find out—all through the deplorable cause, everybody must have copies, over and over again, of everything that has accumulated about it in the way of cartloads of papers (or must pay for them without having them, which is the usual course, for nobody wants them); and must go down the middle and up again, through such an infernal country-dance of costs and fees and nonsense and corruption, as was never dreamed of in the wildest visions of a Witch's Sabbath. Equity sends questions to Law, Law sends questions back to Equity; Law finds it can't do this, Equity finds it can't do that; neither can so much as say it can't do anything, without this solicitor instructing and this counsel appearing for A, and that solicitor instructing and that counsel appearing for B; and so on through the whole alphabet, like the history of the Apple Pie. And thus, through years and years, and lives and lives, everything goes on, constantly beginning over and over again, and nothing ever ends. And we can't get out of the suit on any terms, for we are made parties to it, and *must be* parties to it, whether we like it or not. But it won't do to think of it! When my great uncle, poor Tom Jarndyce, began to think of it, it was the beginning of the end!"

"The Mr. Jarndyce, sir, whose story I have heard?"

He nodded gravely. "I was his heir, and this was his house, Esther. When I came here, it was bleak, indeed. He had left the signs of his misery upon it."

"How changed it must be now!" I said.

"It had been called, before his time, the Peaks. He gave it its present name, and lived here shut up: day and night poring over the wicked heaps of papers in the suit, and hoping against hope to disentangle it from its mystification and bring it to a close. In the meantime, the place became dilapidated, the wind whistled through the cracked walls, the rain fell through the broken roof, the weeds choked the passage to the rotting door. When I brought what remained of him home here, the brains seemed to me to have been blown out of the house too; it was so *shattered and ruined.*"

He walked a little to and fro, after saying this to himself with a shudder, and then looked at me, and brightened, and came and sat down again with his hands in his pockets.

"I told you this was the Growlery, my dear. Where was I?"

I reminded him, at the hopeful change he had made in Bleak House.

"Bleak House: true. There is, in that city of London there, some property of ours, which is much at this day what Bleak House was then,—I say property of ours, meaning of the Suit's, but I ought to call it the property of Costs; for Costs is the only power on earth that will ever get anything out of it now, or will ever know it for anything but an eyesore and a heartsore. It is a street of perishing blind houses, with their eyes stoned out; without a pane of glass, without so much as a window-frame, with the bare blank shutters tumbling from their hinges and falling asunder; the iron rails peeling away in flakes of rust: the chimneys sinking in; the stone steps to every door (and every door might be Death's Door) turning stagnant green; the very crutches on which the ruins are propped, decaying. Although Bleak House was not in Chancery, its master was, and it was stamped with the same seal. These are the Great Seal's impressions, my dear, all over England—the children know them!"

"How changed it is!" I said again.

"Why, so it is," he answered much more cheerfully; "and it is wisdom in you to keep me to the bright side of the picture." (The idea of my wisdom!) "These are things I never talk about, or even think about, excepting in the Growlery here. If you consider it right to mention them to Rick and Ada," looking seriously at me, "you can. I leave it to your discretion Esther."

"I hope, sir"—said I.

"I think you had better call me Guardian, my dear."

I felt that I was choking again—I taxed myself with it, "Esther, now, you know you are!"—when he feigned to say this slightly, as if it were a whim, instead of a thoughtful tenderness. But I gave the housekeeping keys the least shake in the world as a reminder to myself, and folding my hands in a still more determined manner on the basket, looked at him quietly.

"I hope, Guardian," said I, "that you may not trust too much to my discretion. I hope you may not mistake me. I am afraid it will be a disappointment to you to know that I am not clever—but it really is the truth; and you would soon find it out if I had not the honesty to confess it."

He did not seem at all disappointed: quite the contrary. He told me, with a smile all over his face, that he knew me very well indeed, and that I was quite clever enough for him.

"I hope I may turn out so," said I, "but I am much afraid of it, Guardian."

"You are clever enough to be the good little woman of our lives here, my dear," he returned, playfully; "the little old woman of the Child's (I don't mean Skimpole's) Rhyme.

> "'Little old woman, and whither so high?'—
> 'To sweep the cobwebs out of the sky.'

You will sweep them so neatly out of *our* sky, in the course of your housekeeping, Esther, that one of these days, we shall have to abandon the Growlery, and nail up the door."

This was the beginning of my being called Old Woman, and Little Old Woman, and Cobweb, and Mrs. Shipton, and Mother Hubbard, and Dame Durden, and so many names of that sort, that my own name soon became quite lost among them.

"However," said Mr. Jarndyce, "to return to our gossip. Here's Rick, a fine young fellow full of promise. What's to be done with him?"

O my goodness, the idea of asking my advice on such a point!

"Here he is, Esther," said Mr. Jarndyce, comfortably putting his hands into his pockets and stretching out his legs. "He must have a profession; he must make some choice for himself. There will be a world more Wiglomeration about it, I suppose, but it must be done."

"More what, Guardian?" said I.

"More Wiglomeration," said he. "It's the only name I know for the thing. He is a ward in Chancery, my dear. Kenge and Carboy will have something to say about it; Master Somebody—a sort of ridiculous Sexton, digging graves for the merits of causes in a back room at the end of Quality Court, Chancery Lane—will have something to say about it; Counsel will have something to say about it; the Chancellor will have something to say about it; the Satellites will have something to say about it; they will all have to be handsomely fee'd, all round, about it; the whole thing will be vastly ceremonious, wordy, unsatisfactory, and expensive, and I call it, in general, Wiglomeration. How mankind ever came to be afflicted with Wiglomeration, or for whose sins these young people ever fell into a pit of it, I don't know; so it is."

He began to rub his head again, and to hint that he felt the wind. But it was a delightful instance of his kindness towards me, that whether he rubbed his head, or walked about, or did both, his face was sure to recover its benignant expression as it looked at mine; and he was sure to turn comfortable again, and put his hands in his pockets and stretch out his legs.

"Perhaps it would be best, first of all," said I, "to ask Mr. Richard what he inclines to himself."

"Exactly so," he returned. "That's what I mean! You know, just accustom yourself to talk it over, with your tact and in your quiet way, with him and Ada, and see what you all make of it. We are sure to come at the heart of the matter by your means, little woman."

I really was frightened at the thought of the importance I was attaining, and the number of things that were being confided to me. I had not meant this at all; I had meant that he should speak to Richard. But of course I said nothing in reply, except that I would do my best, though I feared (I really felt it necessary to repeat this) that he thought me much more sagacious than I was. At which my guardian only laughed the pleasantest laugh I ever heard.

"Come!" he said, rising and pushing back his chair. "I think we may have done with the Growlery for one day! Only a concluding word. Esther, my dear, do you wish to ask me anything?"

He looked so attentively at me, that I looked attentively at him, and felt sure I understood him.

"About myself, sir?" said I.

"Yes."

"Guardian," said I, venturing to put my hand, which was suddenly colder than I could have wished, in his, "nothing! I am quite sure that if there were anything I ought to know, or had any need to know, I should not have to ask you to tell it to me. If my whole reliance and confidence were not placed in you, I must have a hard heart indeed. I have nothing to ask you; nothing in the world."

He drew my hand through his arm, and we went away to look for Ada. From that hour I felt quite easy with him, quite unreserved, quite content to know no more, quite happy.

We lived, at first, rather a busy life at Bleak House; for we had to become acquainted with *many residents in and out of the* neighbourhood who knew Mr.

Jarndyce. It seemed to Ada and me that everybody knew him, who wanted to do anything with anybody else's money. It amazed us, when we began to sort his letters, and to answer some of them for him in the Growlery of a morning, to find how the great object of the lives of nearly all his correspondents appeared to be to form themselves into committees for getting in and laying out money. The ladies were as desperate as the gentlemen; indeed, I think they were even more so. They threw themselves into committees in the most impassioned manner, and collected subscriptions with a vehemence quite extraordinary. It appeared to us that some of them must pass their whole lives in dealing out subscription-cards to the whole Post-office Directory—shilling cards, half-crown cards, half-sovereign cards, penny cards. They wanted everything. They wanted wearing apparel, they wanted linen rags, they wanted money, they wanted coals, they wanted soup, they wanted interest, they wanted autographs, they wanted flannel, they wanted whatever Mr. Jarndyce had—or had not. Their objects were as various as their demands. They were going to raise new buildings, they were going to pay off debts on old buildings, they were going to establish in a picturesque building (engraving of proposed West Elevation attached) the Sisterhood of Mediæval Marys; they were going to give a testimonial to Mrs. Jellyby; they were going to have their Secretary's portrait painted, and presented to his mother-in-law, whose deep devotion to him was well known; they were going to get up everything, I really believe, from five hundred thousand tracts to an annuity, and from a marble monument to a silver tea-pot. They took a multitude of titles. They were the Women of England, the Daughters of Britain, the Sisters of all the Cardinal Virtues separately, the Females of America, the Ladies of a hundred denominations. They appeared to be always excited about canvassing and electing. They seemed to our poor wits, and according to their own accounts, to be constantly polling people by tens of thousands, yet never bringing their candidates in for anything. It made our heads ache to think, on the whole, what feverish lives they must lead.

Among the ladies who were most distinguished for this rapacious benevolence (if I may use the expression), was a Mrs. Pardiggle, who seemed, as I judged from the number of her letters to Mr. Jarndyce, to be almost as powerful a correspondent as Mrs. Jellyby herself. We observed that the wind always changed, when Mrs. Pardiggle became the subject of conversation: and that it invariably interrupted Mr. Jarndyce, and prevented his going any farther, when he had remarked that there were two classes of charitable people; one, the people who did a little and made a great deal of noise; the other, the people who did a great deal and made no noise at all. We were therefore curious to see Mrs. Pardiggle, suspecting her to be a type of the former class; and were glad when she called one day with her five young sons.

She was a formidable style of lady, with spectacles, a prominent nose, and a loud voice, who had the effect of wanting a great deal of room. And she really did, for she knocked down little chairs with her skirts that were quite a great way off. As only Ada and I were at home, we received her timidly; for she seemed to come in like cold weather, and to make the little Pardiggles blue as they followed.

"These, young ladies," said Mrs. Pardiggle, with great volubility, after the first salutations, "are my five boys. You may have seen their names in a printed subscription list (perhaps more than one), in the possession of our esteemed friend, Mr. Jarndyce. Egbert, my eldest (twelve), is the boy who sent out his pocket-money, to the amount of five-and-threepence, to the Tockahoopo Indians. Oswald, my second (ten-and-a-half), is the child who contributed two-and-ninepence to the Great National Smithers Testimonial. Francis, my third (nine), one-and-sixpence-halfpenny; Felix, my fourth (seven), eightpence to the Superannuated

dows; Alfred, my youngest (five), has voluntarily enrolled himself in the In-
nt Bonds of Joy, and is pledged never, through life, to use tobacco in any form."
We had never seen such dissatisfied children. It was not merely that they were
azed and shrivelled—though they were certainly that too—but they looked
olutely ferocious with discontent. At the mention of the Tockahoopo Indians,
uld really have supposed Egbert to be one of the most baleful members of that
e, he gave me such a savage frown. The face of each child, as the amount of
contribution was mentioned, darkened in a peculiarly vindictive manner, but
was by far the worst. I must except, however, the little recruit into the
nt Bonds of Joy, who was stolidly and evenly miserable.
You have been visiting, I understand," said Mrs. Pardiggle, "at Mrs.
Jy's?"

said yes, we had passed one night there.
rs. Jellyby," pursued the lady, always speaking in the same demonstrative,
hard tone, so that her voice impressed my fancy as if it had a sort of spec-
on too—and I may take the opportunity of remarking that her spectacles
ade the less engaging by her eyes being what Ada called "choking eyes,"
g very prominent; "Mrs. Jellyby is a benefactor to society, and deserves a
hand. My boys have contributed to the African project—Egbert, one-
being the entire allowance of nine weeks; Oswald, one-and-a-penny-half-
being the same; the rest, according to their little means. Nevertheless, I
o with Mrs. Jellyby in all things. I do not go with Mrs. Jellyby in her
of her young family. It has been noticed. It has been observed that
family are excluded from participation in the objects to which she is
She may be right, she may be wrong; but, right or wrong, this is not
with my young family. I take them everywhere."
afterwards convinced (and so was Ada) that from the ill-conditioned
d, these words extorted a sharp yell. He turned it off into a yawn, but
a yell.

ttend Matins with me (very prettily done), at half-past six o'clock in
g all the year round, including of course the depth of winter," said
gle rapidly, "and they are with me during the revolving duties of the
a School lady, I am a Visiting lady, I am a Reading lady, I am a
lady; I am on the local Linen Box Committee, and many general
; and my canvassing alone is very extensive—perhaps no one's more
y are my companions everywhere; and by these means they acquire
ge of the poor, and that capacity of doing charitable business in
burt, that taste for the sort of thing—which will render them in after
to their neighbours, and a satisfaction to themselves. My young
frivolous; they expend the entire amount of their allowance, in
under my direction; and they have attended as many public
listened to as many lectures, orations, and discussions, as generally
of few grown people. Alfred (five), who, as I mentioned, has of
n joined the Infant Bonds of Joy, was one of the very few children
consciousness on that occasion, after a fervid address of two
chairman of the evening."
ed at us as if he never could, or would, forgive the injury of that

ve observed, Miss Summerson," said Mrs. Pardiggle, "in some
ich I have referred, in the possession of our esteemed friend Mr.
e names of my young family are concluded with the name of
F.R.S., one pound. That is their father. We usually observe
I put down my mite first; then my young family enrol their

contributions, according to their ages and their little means; and then Mr. Pardiggle brings up the rear. Mr. Pardiggle is happy to throw in his limited donation, under my direction; and thus things are made, not only pleasant to ourselves, but, we trust, improving to others."

Suppose Mr. Pardiggle were to dine with Mr. Jellyby, and suppose Mr. Jellyby were to relieve his mind after dinner to Mr. Pardiggle, would Mr. Pardiggle, in return, make any confidential communication to Mr. Jellyby? I was quite confused to find myself thinking this, but it came into my head.

"You are very pleasantly situated here!" said Mrs. Pardiggle.

We were glad to change the subject; and, going to the window, pointed out the beauties of the prospect, on which the spectacles appeared to me to rest with curious indifference.

"You know Mr. Gusher?" said our visitor.

We were obliged to say that we had not the pleasure of Mr. Gusher's acquaintance.

"The loss is yours, I assure you," said Mrs. Pardiggle, with her commanding deportment. "He is a very fervid impassioned speaker—full of fire! Stationed in a waggon on this lawn, now, which, from the shape of the land, is naturally adapted to a public meeting, he would improve almost any occasion you could mention for hours and hours! By this time, young ladies," said Mrs. Pardiggle, moving back to her chair, and overturning, as if by invisible agency, a little round table at a considerable distance with my work-basket on it, "by this time you have found me out, I dare say?"

This was really such a confusing question that Ada looked at me in perfect dismay. As to the guilty nature of my own consciousness, after what I had been thinking, it must have been expressed in the colour of my cheeks.

"Found out, I mean," said Mrs. Pardiggle, "the prominent point in my character. I am aware that it is so prominent as to be discoverable immediately. I lay myself open to detection, I know. Well! I freely admit, I am a woman of business. I love hard work; I enjoy hard work. The excitement does me good. I am so accustomed and inured to hard work that I don't know what fatigue is."

We murmured that it was very astonishing and very gratifying: or something to that effect. I don't think we knew what it was either, but this is what our politeness expressed.

"I do not understand what it is to be tired; you cannot tire me if you try!" said Mrs. Pardiggle. "The quantity of exertion (which is no exertion to me), the amount of business (which I regard as nothing), that I go through, sometimes astonishes myself. I have seen my young family, and Mr. Pardiggle, quite worn out with witnessing it, when I may truly say I have been as fresh as a lark!"

If that dark-visaged eldest boy could look more malicious than he had already looked, this was the time when he did it. I observed that he doubled his right fist, and delivered a secret blow into the crown of his cap, which was under his left arm.

"This gives me a great advantage when I am making my rounds," said Mrs. Pardiggle. "If I find a person unwilling to hear what I have to say, I tell that person directly, 'I am incapable of fatigue, my good friend, I am never tired, and I mean to go on until I have done.' It answers admirably! Miss Summerson, I hope I shall have your assistance in my visiting rounds immediately, and Miss Clare's very soon?"

At first I tried to excuse myself, for the present, on the general ground of having occupations to attend to, which I must not neglect. But as this was

an ineffectual protest, I then said, more particularly, that I was not sure of my qualifications. That I was inexperienced in the art of adapting my mind to minds very differently situated, and addressing them from suitable points of view. That I had not that delicate knowledge of the heart which must be essential to such a work. That I had much to learn, myself, before I could teach others, and that I could not confide in my good intentions alone. For these reasons, I thought it best to be as useful as I could, and to render what kind services I could, to those immediately about me; and to try to let that circle of duty gradually and naturally expand itself. All this I said, with anything but confidence; because Mrs. Pardiggle was much older than I, and had great experience, and was so very military in her manners.

"You are wrong, Miss Summerson," said she: "but perhaps you are not equal to hard work, or the excitement of it; and that makes a vast difference. If you would like to see how I go through my work, I am now about—with my young family—to visit a brickmaker in the neighbourhood (a very bad character), and shall be glad to take you with me. Miss Clare also, if she will do me the favour."

Ada and I interchanged looks, and, as we were going out in any case, accepted the offer. When we hastily returned from putting on our bonnets, we found the young family languishing in a corner, and Mrs. Pardiggle sweeping about the room, knocking down nearly all the light objects it contained. Mrs. Pardiggle took possession of Ada, and I followed with the family.

Ada told me afterwards that Mrs. Pardiggle talked in the same loud tone (that, indeed, I overheard), all the way to the brickmaker's, about an exciting contest which she had for two or three years waged against another lady, relative to the bringing in of their rival candidates for a pension somewhere. There had been a quantity of printing, and promising, and proxying, and polling; and it appeared to have imparted great liveliness to all concerned, except the pensioners—who were not elected yet.

I am very fond of being confided in by children, and am happy in being usually favoured in that respect, but on this occasion it gave me great uneasiness. As soon as we were out of doors, Egbert, with the manner of a little footpad, demanded a shilling of me, on the ground that his pocket-money was "boned" from him. On my pointing out the great impropriety of the word, especially in connexion with his parent (for he added sulkily "By her!"), he pinched me and said "O then! Now! Who are you! *You* wouldn't like it, I think? What does she make a sham for, and pretend to give me money, and take it away again? Why do you call it *my* allowance, and never let me spend it?" These exasperating questions so inflamed his mind, and the minds of Oswald and Francis, that they all pinched me at once, and in a dreadfully expert way: screwing up such little pieces of my arms that I could hardly forbear crying out. Felix, at the same time, stamped upon my toes. And the Bond of Joy, who, on account of always having the whole of his little income anticipated, stood in fact pledged to abstain from cakes as well as tobacco, so swelled with grief and rage when we passed a pastry-cook's shop, that he terrified me by becoming purple. I never underwent so much, both in body and mind, in the course of a walk with young people, as from these unnaturally constrained children, when they paid me the compliment of being natural.

I was glad when we came to the brickmaker's house; though it was one of a cluster of wretched hovels in a brickfield, with pigsties close to the broken windows, and miserable little gardens before the doors, growing nothing but stagnant pools. Here and there, an old tub was put to catch the droppings of rain-water from a roof, *or they were banked up with mud into a little pond like a*

large dirt-pie. At the doors and windows, some men and women lounged or prowled about, and took little notice of us, except to laugh to one another, or to say something as we passed, about gentlefolks minding their own business, and not troubling their heads and muddying their shoes with coming to look after other people's.

Mrs. Pardiggle, leading the way with a great show of moral determination, and talking with much volubility about the untidy habits of the people (though I doubted if the best of us could have been tidy in such a place), conducted us into a cottage at the farthest corner, the ground-floor room of which we nearly filled. Besides ourselves, there were in this damp offensive room—a woman with a black eye, nursing a poor little gasping baby by the fire; a man, all stained with clay and mud, and looking very dissipated, lying at full length on the ground, smoking a pipe; a powerful young man, fastening a collar on a dog; and a bold girl, doing some kind of washing in very dirty water. They all looked up at us as we came in, and the woman seemed to turn her face towards the fire, as if to hide her bruised eye; nobody gave us any welcome.

"Well, my friends," said Mrs. Pardiggle; but her voice had not a friendly sound, I thought; it was much too business-like and systematic. "How do you do, all of you? I am here again. I told you, you couldn't tire me, you know. I am fond of hard work, and am true to my word."

"There an't," growled the man on the floor, whose head rested on his hand as he stared at us, "any more on you to come in, is there?"

"No, my friend," said Mrs. Pardiggle, seating herself on one stool, and knocking down another. "We are all here."

"Because I thought there warn't enough of you, perhaps?" said the man, with his pipe between his lips, as he looked round upon us.

The young man and the girl both laughed. Two friends of the young man whom we had attracted to the doorway, and who stood there with their hands in their pockets, echoed the laugh noisily.

"You can't tire me, good people," said Mrs. Pardiggle to these latter. "I enjoy hard work; and the harder you make mine, the better I like it."

"Then make it easy for her!" growled the man upon the floor. "I wants it done, and over. I wants a end of these liberties took with my place. I wants an end of being drawed like a badger. Now you're a-going to poll-pry and question according to custom—I know what you're a-going to be up to. Well! You haven't got no occasion to be up to it. I'll save you the trouble. Is my daughter a-washin? Yes, she *is* a-washin. Look at the water. Smell it! That's wot we drinks. How do you like it, and what do you think of gin, instead! An't my place dirty? Yes, it is dirty—it's nat'rally dirty, and it's nat'rally onwholesome; and we've had five dirty and onwholesome children, as is all dead infants, and so much the better for them, and for us besides. Have I read the little book wot you left? No, I an't read the little book wot you left. There an't nobody here as knows how to read it; and if there wos, it wouldn't be suitable to me. It's a book fit for a babby, and I'm not a babby. If you was to leave me a doll, I shouldn't nuss it. How have I been conducting of myself? Why, I've been drunk for three days; and I'd a been drunk four, if I'd a had the money. Don't I never mean for to go to church? No, I don't never mean for to go to church. I shouldn't be expected there, if I did; the beadle 's too gen-teel for me. And how did my wife get that black eye? Why, I giv' it her; and if she says I didn't, she's a Lie!"

He had pulled his pipe out of his mouth to say all this, and he now turned over on his other side, and smoked again. Mrs. Pardiggle, who had been regarding him through her spectacles with a forcible composure, calculated, I could not help

thinking, to increase his antagonism, pulled out a good book, as if it were a constable's staff, and took the whole family into custody. I mean into religious custody, of course; but she really did it, as if she were an inexorable moral Policeman carrying them all off to a station-house.

Ada and I were very uncomfortable. We both felt intrusive and out of place; and we both thought that Mrs. Pardiggle would have got on infinitely better, if she had not had such a mechanical way of taking possession of people. The children sulked and stared; the family took no notice of us whatever, except when the young man made the dog bark: which he usually did when Mrs. Pardiggle was most emphatic. We both felt painfully sensible that between us and these people there was an iron barrier, which could not be removed by our new friend. By whom, or how, it could be removed, we did not know; but we knew that. Even what she read and said, seemed to us to be ill chosen for such auditors, if it had been imparted ever so modestly and with ever so much tact. As to the little book to which the man on the floor had referred, we acquired a knowledge of it afterwards; and Mr. Jarndyce said he doubted if Robinson Crusoe could have read it, though he had had no other on his desolate island.

We were much relieved, under these circumstances, when Mrs. Pardiggle left off. The man on the floor then turning his head round again, said morosely,

"Well! You've done, have you?"

"For to-day, I have, my friend. But I am never fatigued. I shall come to you again, in your regular order," returned Mrs. Pardiggle with demonstrative cheerfulness.

"So long as you goes now," said he, folding his arms and shutting his eyes with an oath, "you may do wot you like!"

Mrs. Pardiggle accordingly rose, and made a little vortex in the confined room from which the pipe itself very narrowly escaped. Taking one of her young family in each hand, and telling the others to follow closely, and expressing her hope that the brickmaker and all his house would be improved when she saw them next, she then proceeded to another cottage. I hope it is not unkind in me to say that she certainly did make, in this, as in everything else, a show that was not conciliatory, of doing charity by wholesale, and of dealing in it to a large extent.

She supposed that we were following her; but as soon as the space was left clear, we approached the woman sitting by the fire, to ask if the baby were ill.

She only looked at it as it lay on her lap. We had observed before, that when she looked at it she covered her discoloured eye with her hand, as though she wished to separate any association with noise and violence and ill-treatment, from the poor little child.

Ada, whose gentle heart was moved by its appearance, bent down to touch its little face. As she did so, I saw what happened and drew her back. The child died.

"O Esther!" cried Ada, sinking on her knees beside it. "Look here! O Esther, my love, the little thing! The suffering, quiet, pretty little thing! I am so sorry for it. I am so sorry for the mother. I never saw a sight so pitiful as this before! O baby, baby!"

Such compassion, such gentleness, as that with which she bent down weeping, and put her hand upon the mother's, might have softened any mother's heart that ever beat. The woman at first gazed at her in astonishment, and then burst into tears.

Presently I took the light burden from her lap; did what I could to make the baby's rest the prettier and gentler; laid it on a shelf, and covered it with my own handkerchief. We tried to comfort the mother, and we whispered to her what Our Saviour said of children. She answered nothing, but sat weeping—weeping very much.

When I turned, I found that the young man had taken out the dog, and was standing at the door looking in upon us; with dry eyes, but quiet. The girl was quiet too, and sat in a corner looking on the ground. The man had risen. He still smoked his pipe with an air of defiance, but he was silent.

An ugly woman, very poorly clothed, hurried in while I was glancing at them, and coming straight up to the mother, said, "Jenny! Jenny!" The mother rose on being so addressed, and fell upon the woman's neck.

She also had upon her face and arms the marks of ill-usage. She had no kind of grace about her, but the grace of sympathy; but when she condoled with the woman, and her own tears fell, she wanted no beauty. I say condoled, but her only words were "Jenny! Jenny!" All the rest was in the tone in which she said them.

I thought it very touching to see these two women, coarse and shabby and beaten, so united; to see what they could be to one another; to see how they felt for one another; how the heart of each to each was softened by the hard trials of their lives. I think the best side of such people is almost hidden from us. What the poor are to the poor is little known, excepting to themselves and God.

We felt it better to withdraw and leave them uninterrupted. We stole out quietly, and without notice from any one except the man. He was leaning against the wall near the door; and finding that there was scarcely room for us to pass, went out before us. He seemed to want to hide that he did this on our account, but we perceived that he did, and thanked him. He made no answer.

Ada was so full of grief all the way home, and Richard, whom we found at home, was so distressed to see her in tears (though he said to me when she was not present, how beautiful it was too!) that we arranged to return at night with some little comforts, and repeat our visit at the brickmaker's house. We said as little as we could to Mr. Jarndyce, but the wind changed directly.

Richard accompanied us at night to the scene of our morning expedition. On our way there, we had to pass a noisy drinking-house, where a number of men were flocking about the door. Among them, and prominent in some dispute, was the father of the little child. At a short distance, we passed the young man and the dog, in congenial company. The sister was standing laughing and talking with some other young women, at the corner of the row of cottages; but she seemed ashamed, and turned away as we went by.

We left our escort within sight of the brickmaker's dwelling, and proceeded by ourselves. When we came to the door, we found the woman who had brought such consolation with her, standing there, looking anxiously out.

"It's you, young ladies, is it?" she said in a whisper. "I'm a-watching for my master. My heart's in my mouth. If he was to catch me away from home, he'd pretty near murder me."

"Do you mean your husband?" said I.

"Yes, miss, my master. Jenny's asleep, quite worn out. She's scarcely had the child off her lap, poor thing, these seven days and nights, except when I've been able to take it for a minute or two."

As she gave way for us, she went softly in, and put what we had brought, near the miserable bed on which the mother slept. No effort had been made to clean the room—it seemed in its nature almost hopeless of being clean; but the small waxen form, from which so much solemnity diffused itself, had been composed afresh, and washed, and neatly dressed in some fragments of white linen; and on my handkerchief, which still covered the poor baby, a little bunch of sweet herbs had been laid by the same rough scarred hands, so lightly, so tenderly!

"May Heaven reward you!" we said to her. "You are a good woman."

"*Me, young ladies?*" she returned with surprise. "Hush! Jenny, Jenny!"

mother had moaned in her sleep, and moved. The sound of the familiar
emed to calm her again. She was quiet once more.
little I thought, when I raised my handkerchief to look upon the tiny
underneath, and seemed to see a halo shine around the child through Ada's
g hair as her pity bent her head—how little I thought in whose unquiet
that handkerchief would come to lie, after covering the motionless and
l breast! I only thought that perhaps the Angel of the child might not
nconscious of the woman who replaced it with so compassionate a hand;
unconscious of her presently, when we had taken leave, and left her at the
y turns looking, and listening in terror for herself, and saying in her old
g manner, "Jenny, Jenny!"

CHAPTER IX.

SIGNS AND TOKENS.

r know how it is, I seem to be always writing about myself. I mean all
e to write about other people, and I try to think about myself as little as
, and I am sure, when I find myself coming into the story again, I am
exed and say, "Dear, dear, you tiresome little creature, I wish you
't!" but it is all of no use. I hope any one who may read what I write,
derstand that if these pages contain a great deal about me, I can only sup-
must be because I have really something to do with them, and can't be
t.

arling and I read together, and worked, and practised; and found so much
ment for our time, that the winter days flew by us like bright-winged birds.
ly in the afternoons, and always in the evenings, Richard gave us his
y. Although he was one of the most restless creatures in the world, he
y was very fond of our society.
as very, very, very fond of Ada. I mean it, and I had better say it at
I had never seen any young people falling in love before, but I found them
te soon. I could not say so, of course, or show that I knew anything
. On the contrary, I was so demure, and used to seem so unconscious,
metimes I considered within myself while I was sitting at work, whether I
growing quite deceitful.
here was no help for it. All I had to do was to be quiet, and I was as
a mouse. They were as quiet as mice, too, so far as any words were con-
but the innocent manner in which they relied more and more upon me, as
ok more and more to one another, was so charming, that I had great
y in not showing how it interested me.
r dear little old woman is such a capital old woman," Richard would say,
up to meet me in the garden early, with his pleasant laugh and perhaps
t tinge of a blush, "that I can't get on without her. Before I begin my
carum day—grinding away at those books and instruments, and then
g up hill and down dale, all the country round, like a highwayman—it
e so much good to come and have a steady walk with our comfortable
that here I am again!"
a know, Dame Durden, dear," Ada would say at night, with her head
y shoulder, and the firelight shining in her thoughtful eyes, "I don't
talk when we *come up-stairs* here. Only to sit a little while, thinking,

with your dear face for company; and to hear the wind, and remember the poor sailors at sea ——"

Ah! Perhaps Richard was going to be a sailor. We had talked it over very often, now, and there was some talk of gratifying the inclination of his childhood for the sea. Mr. Jarndyce had written to a relation of the family, a great Sir Leicester Dedlock, for his interest in Richard's favour, generally; and Sir Leicester had replied in a gracious manner, "that he would be happy to advance the prospects of the young gentleman if it should ever prove to be within his power, which was not at all probable—and that my Lady sent her compliments to the young gentleman (to whom she perfectly remembered that she was allied by remote consanguinity), and trusted that he would ever do his duty in any honourable profession to which he might devote himself."

"So I apprehend it's pretty clear," said Richard to me, "that I shall have to work my own way. Never mind! Plenty of people have had to do that before now, and have done it. I only wish I had the command of a clipping privateer, to begin with, and could carry off the Chancellor and keep him on short allowance until he gave judgment in our cause. He'd find himself growing thin, if he didn't look sharp!"

With a buoyancy and hopefulness and a gaiety that hardly ever flagged, Richard had a carelessness in his character that quite perplexed me—principally because he mistook it, in such a very odd way, for prudence. It entered into all his calculations about money, in a singular manner, which I don't think I can better explain than by reverting for a moment to our loan to Mr. Skimpole.

Mr. Jarndyce had ascertained the amount, either from Mr. Skimpole himself or from Coavinses, and had placed the money in my hands with instructions to me to retain my own part of it and hand the rest to Richard. The number of little acts of thoughtless expenditure which Richard justified by the recovery of his ten pounds, and the number of times he talked to me as if he had saved or realised that amount, would form a sum in simple addition.

"My prudent Mother Hubbard, why not?" he said to me, when he wanted, without the least consideration, to bestow five pounds on the brickmaker. "I made ten pounds, clear, out of Coavinses' business."

"How was that?" said I.

"Why, I got rid of ten pounds which I was quite content to get rid of, and never expected to see any more. You don't deny that?"

"No," said I.

"Very well! then I came into possession of ten pounds—"

"The same ten pounds," I hinted.

"That has nothing to do with it!" returned Richard. "I have got ten pounds more than I expected to have, and consequently I can afford to spend it without being particular."

In exactly the same way, when he was persuaded out of the sacrifice of these five pounds by being convinced that it would do no good, he carried that sum to his credit and drew upon it.

"Let me see!" he would say. "I saved five pounds out of the brickmaker's affair; so, if I have a good rattle to London and back in a post-chaise, and put that down at four pounds, I shall have saved one. And it's a very good thing to save one, let me tell you: a penny saved, is a penny got!"

I believe Richard's was as frank and generous a nature as there possibly can be. He was ardent and brave, and, in the midst of all his wild restlessness, was so gentle, that I knew him like a brother in a few weeks. His gentleness was natural to him, and would have shown itself abundantly, even without Ada's influence; *but, with it, he became* one of the most winning of companions, always so ready

to be interested, and always so happy, sanguine, and light-hearted. I am sure that I, sitting with them, and walking with them, and talking with them, and noticing from day to day how they went on, falling deeper and deeper in love, and saying nothing about it, and each shyly thinking that this love was the greatest of secrets, perhaps not yet suspected even by the other—I am sure that I was scarcely less enchanted than they were, and scarcely less pleased with the pretty dream.

We were going on in this way, when one morning at breakfast Mr. Jarndyce received a letter, and looking at the superscription said, "From Boythorn? Aye, aye!" and opened and read it with evident pleasure, announcing to us, in a parenthesis, when he was about half-way through, that Boythorn was "coming down" on a visit. Now, who was Boythorn? we all thought. And I dare say we all thought, too—I am sure I did, for one—would Boythorn at all interfere with what was going forward?

"I went to school with this fellow, Lawrence Boythorn," said Mr. Jarndyce, tapping the letter as he laid it on the table, "more than five-and-forty years ago. He was then the most impetuous boy in the world, and he is now the most impetuous man. He was then the loudest boy in the world, and he is now the loudest man. He was then the heartiest and sturdiest boy in the world, and he is now the heartiest and sturdiest man. He is a tremendous fellow."

"In stature, sir!" asked Richard.

"Pretty well, Rick, in that respect," said Mr. Jarndyce; "being some ten years older than I, and a couple of inches taller, with his head thrown back like an old soldier, his stalwart chest squared, his hands like a clean blacksmith's, and his lungs!—there's no simile for his lungs. Talking, laughing, or snoring, they make the beams of the house shake."

As Mr. Jarndyce sat enjoying the image of his friend Boythorn, we observed the favourable omen that there was not the least indication of any change in the wind.

"But it's the inside of the man, the warm heart of the man, the passion of the man, the fresh blood of the man, Rick—and Ada, and little Cobweb too, for you are all interested in a visitor!—that I speak of," he pursued. "His language is as sounding as his voice. He is always in extremes; perpetually in the superlative degree. In his condemnation he is all ferocity. You might suppose him to be an Ogre, from what he says; and I believe he has the reputation of one with some people. There! I tell you no more of him beforehand. You must not be surprised to see him take me under his protection; for he has never forgotten that I was a low boy at school, and that our friendship began in his knocking two of my head tyrant's teeth out (he says six) before breakfast. Boythorn and his man," to me, "will be here this afternoon, my dear."

I took care that the necessary preparations were made for Mr. Boythorn's reception, and we looked forward to his arrival with some curiosity. The afternoon wore away, however, and he did not appear. The dinner-hour arrived, and still he did not appear. The dinner was put back an hour, and we were sitting round the fire with no light but the blaze, when the hall-door suddenly burst open, and the hall resounded with these words, uttered with the greatest vehemence and in a stentorian tone:

"We have been misdirected, Jarndyce, by a most abandoned ruffian, who told us to take the turning to the right instead of to the left. He is the most intolerable scoundrel on the face of the earth. His father must have been a most consummate villain, ever to have such a son. I would have had that fellow shot without the least remorse!"

"Did he do it on purpose?" Mr. Jarndyce inquired.

"I have not the slightest *doubt that the* scoundrel has passed his whole existence

in misdirecting travellers!" returned the other. "By my soul, I thought him the worst-looking dog I had ever beheld, when he was telling me to take the turning to the right. And yet I stood before that fellow face to face, and didn't knock his brains out!"

"Teeth, you mean?" said Mr. Jarndyce.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Mr. Lawrence Boythorn, really making the whole house vibrate. "What, you have not forgotten it yet! Ha, ha, ha!—And that was another most consummate vagabond! By my soul, the countenance of that fellow, when he was a boy, was the blackest image of perfidy, cowardice, and cruelty ever set up as a scarecrow in a field of scoundrels. If I were to meet that most unparalleled despot in the streets to-morrow, I would fell him like a rotten tree!"

"I have no doubt of it," said Mr. Jarndyce. "Now, will you come up-stairs?"

"By my soul, Jarndyce," returned his guest, who seemed to refer to his watch, "if you had been married, I would have turned back at the garden-gate, and gone away to the remotest summits of the Himalaya Mountains, sooner than I would have presented myself at this unseasonable hour."

"Not quite so far, I hope?" said Mr. Jarndyce.

"By my life and honour, yes!" cried the visitor. "I wouldn't be guilty of the audacious insolence of keeping a lady of the house waiting all this time, for any earthly consideration. I would infinitely rather destroy myself—infinitely rather!"

Talking thus, they went up-stairs; and presently we heard him in his bedroom thundering "Ha, ha, ha!" and again "Ha, ha, ha!" until the flattest echo in the neighbourhood seemed to catch the contagion, and to laugh as enjoyingly as he did, or as we did when we heard him laugh.

We all conceived a prepossession in his favour; for there was a sterling quality in this laugh, and in his vigorous healthy voice, and in the roundness and fulness with which he uttered every word he spoke, and in the very fury of his superlatives, which seemed to go off like blank cannons and hurt nothing. But we were hardly prepared to have it so confirmed by his appearance, when Mr. Jarndyce presented him. He was not only a very handsome old gentleman—upright and stalwart as he had been described to us—with a massive grey head, a fine composure of face when silent, a figure that might have become corpulent but for his being so continually in earnest that he gave it no rest, and a chin that might have subsided into a double chin but for the vehement emphasis in which it was constantly required to assist; but he was such a true gentleman in his manner, so chivalrously polite, his face was lighted by a smile of so much sweetness and tenderness, and it seemed so plain that he had nothing to hide, but showed himself exactly as he was—incapable (as Richard said) of anything on a limited scale, and firing away with those blank great guns, because he carried no small arms whatever—that really I could not help looking at him with equal pleasure as he sat at dinner, whether he smilingly conversed with Ada and me, or was led by Mr. Jarndyce into some great volley of superlatives, or threw up his head like a bloodhound, and gave out that tremendous Ha, ha, ha!

"You have brought your bird with you, I suppose?" said Mr. Jarndyce.

"By Heaven, he is the most astonishing bird in Europe!" replied the other. "He *is* the most wonderful creature! I wouldn't take ten thousand guineas for that bird. I have left an annuity for his sole support, in case he should outlive me. He is, in sense and attachment, a phenomenon. And his father before him was one of the most astonishing birds that ever lived!"

The subject of this laudation was a very little canary, who was so tame that he was brought down by Mr. Boythorn's man, on his forefinger, and, after taking a gentle flight round the room, alighted on his master's head. To hear Mr. Boythorn *presently expressing* the most implacable and passionate sentiments, with this

nite of a creature quietly perched on his forehead, was to have a good illus-
of his character, I thought.
my soul, Jarndyce," he said, very gently holding up a bit of bread to the
o peck at, "if I were in your place, I would seize every Master in Chancery
hroat to-morrow morning, and shake him until his money rolled out of his
, and his bones rattled in his skin. I would have a settlement out of some-
y fair means or by foul. If you would empower me to do it, I would do it
with the greatest satisfaction!" (All this time the very small canary was
at of his hand.)
ank you, Lawrence, but the suit is hardly at such a point at present,"
Mr. Jarndyce, laughing, "that it would be greatly advanced, even by the
ocess of shaking the Bench and the whole Bar."
re never was such an infernal cauldron as that Chancery, on the face of
!" said Mr. Boythorn. "Nothing but a mine below it on a busy day in
ne, with all its records, rules, and precedents collected in it, and every
ary belonging to it also, high and low, upward and downward, from its
Accountant-General to its father the Devil, and the whole blown to atoms
thousand hundred-weight of gunpowder, would reform it in the least!"
impossible not to laugh at the energetic gravity with which he recom-
this strong measure of reform. When we laughed, he threw up his head,
ok his broad chest, and again the whole country seemed to echo to his Ha,
It had not the least effect in disturbing the bird, whose sense of security
plete; and who hopped about the table with its quick head now on this
now on that, turning its bright sudden eye on its master, as if he were no
an another bird.
how do you and your neighbour get on about the disputed right of way?"
Jarndyce. "You are not free from the toils of the law yourself!"
fellow has brought actions against *me* for trespass, and I have brought
against *him* for trespass," returned Mr. Boythorn. "By Heaven, he is the
fellow breathing. It is morally impossible that his name can be Sir
r. It must be Sir Lucifer."
plimentary to our distant relation!" said my Guardian laughingly, to
Richard.
ould beg Miss Clare's pardon and Mr. Carstone's pardon," resumed our
if I were not reassured by seeing in the fair face of the lady, and the
the gentleman, that it is quite unnecessary, and that they keep their
elation at a comfortable distance."
e keeps us," suggested Richard.
ny soul!" exclaimed Mr. Boythorn, suddenly firing another volley, "that
, and his father was, and his grandfather was, the most stiff-necked, arro-
becile, pig-headed numskull, ever, by some inexplicable mistake of
born in any station of life but a walking-stick's! The whole of that
e the most solemnly conceited and consummate blockheads!—But it's no
he should not shut up my path if he were fifty baronets melted into one,
g in a hundred Chesney Wolds, one within another, like the ivory balls
inese carving. The fellow, by his agent, or secretary, or somebody,
me 'Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet, presents his compliments to Mr.
e Boythorn, and has to call his attention to the fact that the green path-
he old parsonage-house, now the property of Mr. Lawrence Boythorn, is
ester's right of way, being in fact a portion of the park of Chesney Wold;
Sir Leicester finds it convenient to close up the same.' I write to the
Mr. Lawrence Boythorn presents his compliments to Sir Leicester Ded-
ronet, and has to call *his attention* to the fact that he totally denies the

whole of Sir Leicester Dedlock's positions on every possible subject, and has to add, in reference to closing up the pathway, that he will be glad to see the man who may undertake to do it.' The fellow sends a most abandoned villain with one eye, to construct a gateway. I play upon that execrable scoundrel with a fire-engine, until the breath is nearly driven out of his body. The fellow erects a gate in the night. I chop it down and burn it in the morning. He sends his myrmidons to come over the fence, and pass and repass. I catch them in humane man traps, fire split peas at their legs, play upon them with the engine—resolve to free mankind from the insupportable burden of the existence of those lurking ruffians. He brings actions for trespass; I bring actions for trespass. He brings actions for assault and battery; I defend them, and continue to assault and batter. Ha, ha, ha!"

To hear him say all this with unimaginable energy, one might have thought him the angriest of mankind. To see him at the very same time, looking at the bird now perched upon his thumb, and softly smoothing its feathers with his forefinger, one might have thought him the gentlest. To hear him laugh, and see the broad good nature of his face then, one might have supposed that he had not a case in the world, or a dispute, or a dislike, but that his whole existence was a summer joke.

"No, no," he said, "no closing up of my paths, by any Dedlock! Though I willingly confess," here he softened in a moment, "that Lady Dedlock is the most accomplished lady in the world, to whom I would do any homage that a plain gentleman, and no baronet with a head seven hundred years thick, may. A man who joined his regiment at twenty, and, within a week, challenged the most imperious and presumptuous coxcomb of a commanding officer that ever drew the breath of life through a tight waist—and got broke for it—is not the man to be walked over, by all the Sir Lucifers, dead or alive, locked or unlocked. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Nor the man to allow his junior to be walked over, either?" said my Guardian.

"Most assuredly not!" said Mr. Boythorn, clapping him on the shoulder with an air of protection, that had something serious in it, though he laughed. "He will stand by the low boy, always. Jarndyce, you may rely upon him! But, speaking of this trespass—with apologies to Miss Clare and Miss Summerson for the length at which I have pursued so dry a subject—is there nothing for me from your men, Kenge and Carboy?"

"I think not, Esther?" said Mr. Jarndyce.

"Nothing, Guardian."

"Much obliged!" said Mr. Boythorn. "Had no need to ask, after even my slight experience of Miss Summerson's forethought for every one about her." (They all encouraged me; they were determined to do it.) "I inquired because, coming from Lincolnshire, I of course have not yet been in town, and I thought some letters might have been sent down here. I dare say they will report progress to-morrow morning."

I saw him so often, in the course of the evening, which passed very pleasantly, contemplate Richard and Ada with an interest and a satisfaction that made his fine face remarkably agreeable as he sat at a little distance from the piano listening to the music—and he had small occasion to tell us that he was passionately fond of music, for his face showed it—that I asked my Guardian, as we sat at the backgammon board, whether Mr. Boythorn had ever been married.

"No," said he. "No."

"But he meant to be!" said I.

"How did you find out that?" he returned, with a smile.

"Why, Guardian," I explained, not without reddening a little at hazarding what was in my thoughts, "there is something so tender in his manner, after all, and he is so very courtly and gentle to us, and—"

Mr. Jarndyce directed his eyes to where he was sitting, as I have just described him.

I said no more.

"You are right, little woman," he answered. "He was all but married, once. Long ago. And once."

"Did the lady die?"

"No—but she died to him. That time has had its influence on all his later life. Would you suppose him to have a head and a heart full of romance yet?"

"I think, Guardian, I might have supposed so. But it is easy to say that, when you have told me so."

"He has never since been what he might have been," said Mr. Jarndyce, "and now you see him in his age with no one near him but his servant, and his little yellow friend.—It's your throw, my dear!"

I felt, from my Guardian's manner, that beyond this point I could not pursue the subject without changing the wind. I therefore forbore to ask any further questions. I was interested, but not curious. I thought a little while about this old love story in the night, when I was awakened by Mr. Boythorn's lusty snoring; and I tried to do that very difficult thing, imagine old people young again, and invested with the graces of youth. But I fell asleep before I had succeeded, and dreamed of the days when I lived in my godmother's house. I am not sufficiently acquainted with such subjects, to know whether it is at all remarkable that I almost always dreamed of that period of my life.

With the morning, there came a letter from Messrs. Kenge and Carboy to Mr. Boythorn, informing him that one of their clerks would wait upon him at noon. As it was the day of the week on which I paid the bills, and added up my books, and made all the household affairs as compact as possible, I remained at home while Mr. Jarndyce, Ada, and Richard, took advantage of a very fine day to make a little excursion. Mr. Boythorn was to wait for Kenge and Carboy's clerk, and then was to go on foot to meet them on their return.

Well! I was full of business, examining tradesmen's books, adding up columns, paying money, filing receipts, and I dare say making a great bustle about it, when Mr. Guppy was announced and shown in. I had had some idea that the clerk who was to be sent down, might be the young gentleman who had met me at the coach-office; and I was glad to see him, because he was associated with my present happiness.

I scarcely knew him again, he was so uncommonly smart. He had an entirely new suit of glossy clothes on, a shining hat, lilac-kid gloves, a neckerchief of a variety of colours, a large hot-house flower in his button-hole, and a thick gold ring on his little finger. Besides which, he quite scented the dining-room with bear's-grease and other perfumery. He looked at me with an attention that quite confused me, when I begged him to take a seat until the servant should return; and as he sat there, crossing and uncrossing his legs in a corner, and I asked him if he had had a pleasant ride, and hoped that Mr. Kenge was well, I never looked at him, but I found him looking at me, in the same scrutinising and curious way.

When the request was brought to him that he would go up-stairs to Mr. Boythorn's room, I mentioned that he would find lunch prepared for him when he came down, of which Mr. Jarndyce hoped he would partake. He said with some embarrassment, holding the handle of the door, "Shall I have the honour of finding you here, miss?" I replied yes, I should be there; and he went out with a bow and another look.

I thought him only awkward and shy, for he was evidently much embarrassed; and I fancied that the best thing I could do, would be to wait until I saw that he had everything he wanted, and then to leave him to himself. The lunch was soon brought, but it remained for some time on the table. The interview with Mr. Boythorn was a long one—and a stormy one too, I should think; for although his room was at some distance, I heard his loud voice rising every now and then like a high wind, and evidently blowing perfect broadsides of denunciation.

At last Mr. Guppy came back, looking something the worse for the conference. "My eye, miss," he said in a low voice, "he's a Tartar!"

"Pray take some refreshment, sir," said I.

Mr. Guppy sat down at the table, and began nervously sharpening the carving-knife on the carving-fork; still looking at me (as I felt quite sure without looking at him), in the same unusual manner. The sharpening lasted so long, that at last I felt a kind of obligation on me to raise my eyes, in order that I might break the spell under which he seemed to labour, of not being able to leave off.

He immediately looked at the dish, and began to carve.

"What will you take yourself, miss? You'll take a morsel of something?"

"No, thank you," said I.

"Shan't I give you a piece of anything at all, miss?" said Mr. Guppy, hurriedly drinking off a glass of wine.

"Nothing, thank you," said I. "I have only waited to see that you have everything you want. Is there anything I can order for you?"

"No, I am much obliged to you, miss, I'm sure. I've everything that I can require to make me comfortable—at least I—not comfortable—I'm never that:" he drank off two more glasses of wine, one after another.

I thought I had better go.

"I beg your pardon, miss!" said Mr. Guppy, rising, when he saw me rise. "But would you allow me the favour of a minute's private conversation?"

Not knowing what to say, I sat down again.

"What follows is without prejudice, miss?" said Mr. Guppy, anxiously bringing a chair towards my table.

"I don't understand what you mean," said I, wondering.

"It's one of our law terms, miss. You won't make any use of it to my detriment, at Kenge and Carboy's, or elsewhere. If our conversation shouldn't lead to anything, I am to be as I was, and am not to be prejudiced in my situation or worldly prospects. In short, it's in total confidence."

"I am at a loss, sir," said I, "to imagine what you can have to communicate in total confidence to me, whom you have never seen but once; but I should be very sorry to do you any injury."

"Thank you, miss. I'm sure of it—that's quite sufficient." All this time Mr. Guppy was either planing his forehead with his handkerchief, or tightly rubbing the palm of his left hand with the palm of his right. "If you would excuse my taking another glass of wine, miss, I think it might assist me in getting on, without a continual choke that cannot fail to be mutually unpleasant."

He did so, and came back again. I took the opportunity of moving well behind my table.

"You wouldn't allow me to offer you one, would you, miss?" said Mr. Guppy, apparently refreshed.

"Not any," said I.

"Not half a glass?" said Mr. Guppy; "quarter? No! Then, to proceed. My present salary, Miss Summerson, at Kenge and Carboy's, is two pound a-week. When I first had the happiness of looking upon you, it was one-fifteen, and had stood at that figure for a lengthened period. A rise of five has since

lace, and a further rise of five is guaranteed at the expiration of a term not
ng twelve months from the present date. My mother has a little property,
akes the form of a small life annuity; upon which she lives in an inde-
though unassuming manner, in the Old Street Road. She is eminently
ed for a mother-in-law. She never interferes, is all for peace, and her
ion easy. She has her failings—as who has not?—but I never knew her
hen company was present; at which time you may freely trust her with
spirits, or malt liquors. My own abode is lodgings at Penton Place,
ville. It is lowly, but airy, open at the back, and considered one of the
t outlets. Miss Summerson! In the mildest language, I adore you.
you be so kind as to allow me (as I may say) to file a declaration—to make
!"

Guppy went down on his knees. I was well behind my table, and not
ghtened. I said, "Get up from that ridiculous position immediately, sir,
will oblige me to break my implied promise and ring the bell!"
ur me out, miss!" said Mr. Guppy, folding his hands.
annot consent to hear another word, sir," I returned, "unless you get up
e carpet directly, and go and sit down at the table, as you ought to do if
e any sense at all."
oked piteously, but slowly rose and did so.
what a mockery it is, miss," he said, with his hand upon his heart, and
his head at me in a melancholy manner over the tray, "to be stationed
food at such a moment. The soul recoils from food at such a moment,

g you to conclude," said I; "you have asked me to hear you out, and I
to conclude."
ill, miss," said Mr. Guppy. "As I love and honour, so likewise I obey.
that I could make Thee the subject of that vow, before the shrine!"
t is quite impossible," said I, "and entirely out of the question."
m aware," said Mr. Guppy, leaning forward over the tray, and regarding
I again strangely felt, though my eyes were not directed to him, with his
ent look, "I am aware that in a worldly point of view, according to all
nces, my offer is a poor one. But, Miss Summerson! Angel!—No, don't
have been brought up in a sharp school, and am accustomed to a variety
ral practice. Though a young man, I have ferreted out evidence, got up
nd seen lots of life. Blest with your hand, what means might I not find
ncing your interests, and pushing your fortunes! What might I not get to
nearly concerning you? I know nothing now, certainly; but what *might*
I had your confidence, and you set me on?"
him that he addressed my interest, or what he supposed to be my interest,
unsuccessfully as he addressed my inclination; and he would now under-
at I requested him, if he pleased, to go away immediately.
el miss," said Mr. Guppy, "hear but another word! I think you must
n that I was struck with those charms, on the day when I waited at the
seller. I think you must have remarked that I could not forbear a tribute
charms when I put up the steps of the 'ackney-coach. It was a feeble
to Thee, but it was well meant. Thy image has ever since been fixed in
st. I have walked up and down, of an evening, opposite Jellyby's house.
look upon the bricks that once contained Thee. This out of to-day, quite
cessary out so far as the attendance, which was its pretended object, went,
nnel by me alone for Thee alone. If I speak of interest, it is only to
end myself and my respectful wretchedness. Love was before it, and is
."

"I should be pained, Mr. Guppy," said I, rising and putting my hand upon the bell-rope, "to do you, or any one who was sincere, the injustice of slighting any honest feeling, however disagreeably expressed. If you have really meant to give me a proof of your good opinion, though ill-timed and misplaced, I feel that I ought to thank you. I have very little reason to be proud, and I am not proud, I hope," I think I added, without very well knowing what I said, "that you will now go away as if you had never been so exceedingly foolish, and attend to Messrs. Kenge and Carboy's business."

"Half a minute, miss!" cried Mr. Guppy, checking me as I was about to ring. "This has been without prejudice?"

"I will never mention it," said I, "unless you should give me future occasion to do so."

"A quarter of a minute, miss! In case you should think better—at any time, however distant, *that's* no consequence, for my feelings can never alter—of anything I have said, particularly what might I not do—Mr. William Guppy, eighty-seven, Penton Place, or if removed, or dead (of blighted hopes or anything of that sort), care of Mrs. Guppy, three hundred and two, Old Street Road, will be sufficient."

I rang the bell, the servant came, and Mr. Guppy, laying his written card upon the table, and making a dejected bow, departed. Raising my eyes as he went out, I once more saw him looking at me after he had passed the door.

I sat there for another hour or more, finishing my books and payments, and getting through plenty of business. Then, I arranged my desk, and put everything away, and was so composed and cheerful that I thought I had quite dismissed this unexpected incident. But, when I went up-stairs to my own room, I surprised myself by beginning to laugh about it, and then surprised myself still more by beginning to cry about it. In short, I was in a flutter for a little while; and felt as if an old chord had been more coarsely touched than it ever had been since the days of the dear old doll, long buried in the garden.

CHAPTER X.

THE LAW-WRITER.

On the eastern borders of Chancery Lane, that is to say, more particularly in Cook's Court, Cursitor Street, Mr. Snagsby, Law-Stationer, pursues his lawful calling. In the shade of Cook's Court, at most times a shady place, Mr. Snagsby has dealt in all sorts of blank forms of legal process; in skins and rolls of parchment; in paper—foolscap, brief, draft, brown, white, whitey-brown, and blotting; in stamps; in office-quills, pens, ink, India-rubber, pounce, pins, pencils, sealing-wax, and wafers; in red tape and green ferret; in pocket-books, almanacks, diaries, and law lists; in string boxes, rulers, inkstands—glass and leaden, penknives, scissors, bodkins, and other small office-cutlery; in short, in articles too numerous to mention; ever since he was out of his time, and went into partnership with Peffer. On that occasion, Cook's Court was in a manner revolutionised by the new inscription in fresh paint, PEFFER and SNAGSBY, displacing the time-honoured and not easily to be deciphered legend, PEFFER, only. For smoke, which is the London ivy, had so wreathed itself round Peffer's name, and clung to his dwelling-place, that the affectionate parasite quite overpowered the parent *tree.*

lifetime, and likewise in the period of Snagsby's "time" of seven long
re dwelt with Peffer, in the same law-stationering premises, a niece—
hrewd niece, something too violently compressed about the waist, and
arp nose like a sharp autumn evening, inclining to be frosty towards the
ie Cook's-Courtiers had a rumour flying among them, that the mother of
: did, in her daughter's childhood, moved by too jealous a solicitude that
: should approach perfection, lace her up every morning with her maternal
n-t the bed-post for a stronger hold and purchase; and further, that she
internally pints of vinegar and lemon-juice: which acids, they held, had
to the nose and temper of the patient. With whichsoever of the many
of Rumour this frothy report originated, it either never reached, or never
d, the ears of young Snagsby; who, having wooed and won its fair
n his arrival at man's estate, entered into two partnerships at once. So
Cook's Court, Cursitor Street, Mr. Snagsby and the niece are one; and
: still cherishes her figure—which, however tastes may differ, is un-
ibly so far precious, that there is mighty little of it.
id Mrs. Snagsby are not only one bone and one flesh, but, to the neigh-
inking, one voice too. That voice, appearing to proceed from Mrs.
alone, is heard in Cook's Court very often. Mr. Snagsby, otherwise
ie finds expression through these dulcet tones, is rarely heard. He is a
d, timid man, with a shining head, and a scrubby clump of black hair
out at the back. He tends to meekness and obesity. As he stands at
in Cook's Court, in his grey shop-coat and black calico sleeves, looking
clouds; or stands behind a desk in his dark shop, with a heavy flat ruler,
and slicing at sheepskin, in company with his two 'prentices; he is
ally a retiring and unassuming man. From beneath his feet, at such
from a shrill ghost unquiet in its grave, there frequently arise com-
and lamentations in the voice already mentioned; and haply, on some
, when these reach a sharper pitch than usual, Mr. Snagsby mentions to
itices, "I think my little woman is a-giving it to Guster!"
proper name, so used by Mr. Snagsby, has before now sharpened the wit

found with her head in the pail, or the sink, or the copper, or the dinner, or anything else that happens to be near her at the time of her seizure, she is always at work. She is a satisfaction to the parents and guardians of the 'prentices, who feel that there is little danger of her inspiring tender emotions in the breast of youth; she is a satisfaction to Mrs. Snagsby, who can always find fault with her; she is a satisfaction to Mr. Snagsby, who thinks it a charity to keep her. The law-stationer's establishment is, in Guster's eyes, a Temple of plenty and splendour. She believes the little drawing-room up-stairs, always kept, as one may say, with its hair in papers and its pinafore on, to be the most elegant apartment in Christendom. The view it commands of Cook's Court at one end (not to mention a squint into Cursitor Street), and of Coavinses' the sheriff's officer's backyard at the other, she regards as a prospect of unequalled beauty. The portraits it displays in oil—and plenty of it too—of Mr. Snagsby looking at Mrs. Snagsby, and of Mrs. Snagsby looking at Mr. Snagsby, are in her eyes as achievements of Raphael or Titian. Guster has some recompenses for her many privations.

Mr. Snagsby refers everything not in the practical mysteries of the business to Mrs. Snagsby. She manages the money, reproaches the Tax-gatherers, appoints the times and places of devotion on Sundays, licenses Mr. Snagsby's entertainments, and acknowledges no responsibility as to what she thinks fit to provide for dinner; insomuch that she is the high standard of comparison among the neighbouring wives, a long way down Chancery Lane on both sides, and even out in Holborn, who, in any domestic passages of arms, habitually call upon their husbands to look at the difference between their (the wives') position and Mrs. Snagsby's, and their (the husbands') behaviour and Mr. Snagsby's. Rumour, always flying, bat-like, about Cook's Court, and skimming in and out at everybody's windows, does say that Mrs. Snagsby is jealous and inquisitive; and that Mr. Snagsby is sometimes worried out of house and home, and that if he had the spirit of a mouse he wouldn't stand it. It is even observed, that the wives who quote him to their self-willed husbands as a shining example, in reality look down upon him; and that nobody does so with greater superciliousness than one particular lady, whose lord is more than suspected of laying his umbrella on her as an instrument of correction. But these vague whisperings may arise from Mr. Snagsby's being, in his way, rather a meditative and poetical man; loving to walk in Staple Inn in the summer time, and to observe how countrified the sparrows and the leaves are; also to lounge about the Rolls Yard of a Sunday afternoon, and to remark (if in good spirits) that there were old times once, and that you'd find a stone coffin or two, now, under that chapel, he'll be bound, if you was to dig for it. He solaces his imagination, too, by thinking of the many Chancellors and Vices, and Masters of the Rolls, who are deceased; and he gets such a flavour of the country out of telling the two 'prentices how he *has* heard say that a brook "as clear as crystial" once ran right down the middle of Holborn, when Turnstile really was a turnstile, leading slap away into the meadows—gets such a flavour of the country out of this, that he never wants to go there.

The day is closing in and the gas is lighted, but is not yet fully effective, for it is not quite dark. Mr. Snagsby standing at his shop-door looking up at the clouds, sees a crow, who is out late, skim westward over the slice of sky belonging to Cook's Court. The crow flies straight across Chancery Lane and Lincoln's Inn Garden, into Lincoln's Inn Fields.

Here, in a large house, formerly a house of state, lives Mr. Tulkinghorn. It is let off in sets of chambers now; and in those shrunken fragments of its greatness, lawyers lie like maggots in nuts. But its roomy staircases, passages, and antechambers still remain; and even its painted ceilings, where Allegory, in Roman *helmet and celestial* linen, sprawls among balustrades and pillars, flowers,

, and big-legged boys, and makes the head ache—as would seem to be ry's object always, more or less. Here, among his many boxes labelled anscendent names, lives Mr. Tulkinghorn, when not speechlessly at home in y-houses where the great ones of the earth are bored to death. Here he is , quiet at his table. An Oyster of the old school, whom nobody can open. as he is to look at, so is his apartment in the dusk of the present after- Rusty, out of date, withdrawing from attention, able to afford it. Heavy backed old-fashioned mahogany and horsehair chairs, not easily lifted. e tables with spindle-legs and dusty baize covers, presentation prints of iders of great titles in the last generation, or the last but one, environ him. k and dingy Turkey-carpet muffles the floor where he sits, attended by two s in old-fashioned silver candlesticks, that give a very insufficient light to ge room. The titles on the backs of his books have retired into the binding; hing that can have a lock has got one; no key is visible. Very few loose are about. He has some manuscript near him, but is not referring to it. the round top of an inkstand, and two broken bits of sealing-wax, he is and slowly working out whatever train of indecision is in his mind. Now, stand top is in the middle: now, the red bit of sealing-wax, now the black That's not it. Mr. Tulkinghorn must gather them all up and begin again.

e, beneath the painted ceiling, with foreshortened Allegory staring down at rusion as if it meant to swoop upon him, and he cutting it dead, Mr. Tul- rn has at once his house and office. He keeps no staff; only one middle- an, usually a little out at elbows, who sits in a high Pew in the hall, and ly overburdened with business. Mr. Tulkinghorn is not in a common way. nts no clerks. He is a great reservoir of confidences, not to be so tapped. ents want *him*; he is all in all. Drafts that he requires to be drawn, are by special-pleaders in the Temple on mysterious instructions; fair copies e requires to be made, are made at the stationers', expense being no con- ion. The middle-aged man in the Pew, knows scarcely more of the affairs Peerage, than any crossing-sweeper in Holborn.

red bit, the black bit, the inkstand top, the other inkstand top, the little ss. So! You to the middle, you to the right, you to the left. This train cision must surely be worked out now or never.—Now! Mr. Tulkinghorn s, adjusts his spectacles, puts on his hat, puts the manuscript in his pocket, ut, tells the middle-aged man out at elbows, "I shall be back presently." arely tells him anything more explicit.

Tulkinghorn goes, as the crow came—not quite so straight, but nearly— k's Court, Cursitor Street. To Snagsby's, Law Stationer's, Deeds engrossed pied, Law-Writing executed in all its branches, &c., &c., &c.

somewhere about five or six o'clock in the afternoon, and a balmy fragrance rm tea hovers in Cook's Court. It hovers about Snagsby's door. The are early there; dinner at half-past one, and supper at half-past nine. Mr. by was about to descend into the subterranean regions to take tea, when he out of his door just now, and saw the crow who was out late.

aster at home?"

ter is minding the shop, for the 'prentices take tea in the kitchen, with Mr. rs. Snagsby; consequently, the robe-maker's two daughters, combing their t the two glasses in the two second-floor windows of the opposite house, are iving the two 'prentices to distraction, as they fondly suppose, but are awakening the unprofitable admiration of Guster, whose hair won't grow, ver would, and, it is confidently thought, never will.

aster at home?" says Mr. Tulkinghorn.

ter is at home, and *Guster will fetch him*. Guster disappears, glad to get

out of the shop, which she regards with mingled dread and veneration as a sto house of awful implements of the great torture of the law: a place not to entered after the gas is turned off.

Mr. Snagsby appears: greasy, warm, herbaceous, and chewing. Bolts a bit bread and butter. Says, "Bless my soul, sir! Mr. Tulkinghorn!"

"I want half a word with you, Snagsby."

"Certainly, sir! Dear me, sir, why didn't you send your young man round me? Pray walk into the back shop, sir." Snagsby has brightened in a mome

The confined room, strong of parchment-grease, is warehouse, counting-hou and copying-office. Mr. Tulkinghorn sits, facing round, on a stool at the desk

"Jarndyce and Jarndyce, Snagsby."

"Yes, sir." Mr. Snagsby turns up the gas, and coughs behind his ha modestly anticipating profit. Mr. Snagsby, as a timid man, is accustomed cough with a variety of expressions, and so to save words.

"You copied some affidavits in that cause for me lately."

"Yes, sir, we did."

"There was one of them," says Mr. Tulkinghorn, carelessly feeling—tig unopenable Oyster of the old school!—in the wrong coat-pocket, "the ha writing of which is peculiar, and I rather like. As I happened to be passing, thought I had it about me, I looked in to ask you—but I haven't got it. matter, any other time will do—Ah! here it is!—I looked in to ask you w copied this?"

"Who copied this, sir?" says Mr. Snagsby, taking it, laying it flat on desk, and separating all the sheets at once with a twirl and a twist of the left h peculiar to law-stationers. "We gave this out, sir. We were giving out rath large quantity of work just at that time. I can tell you in a moment who cop it, sir, by referring to my Book."

Mr. Snagsby takes his Book down from the safe, makes another bolt of the of bread and butter which seemed to have stopped short, eyes the affidavit asi and brings his right forefinger travelling down a page of the Book. "Jewb Packer—Jarndyce."

"Jarndyce! Here we are, sir," says Mr. Snagsby. "To be sure! I mi have remembered it. This was given out, sir, to a Writer who lodges just over the opposite side of the lane."

Mr. Tulkinghorn has seen the entry, found it before the Law-stationer, rea while the forefinger was coming down the hill.

"*What* do you call him? Nemo?" says Mr. Tulkinghorn.

"Nemo, sir. Here it is. Forty-two folio. Given out on the Wednes night, at eight o'clock; brought in on the Thursday morning, at half after nin

"Nemo!" repeats Mr. Tulkinghorn. "Nemo is Latin for no one."

"It must be English for some one, sir, I think," Mr. Snagsby submits, with deferential cough. "It is a person's name. Here it is, you see, sir! Forty-t folio. Given out Wednesday night, eight o'clock; brought in Thursday morni half after nine."

The tail of Mr. Snagsby's eye becomes conscious of the head of Mrs. Snag looking in at the shop-door to know what he means by deserting his tea. Snagsby addresses an explanatory cough to Mrs. Snagsby, as who should s "My dear, a customer!"

"Half after nine, sir," repeats Mr. Snagsby. "Our law-writers, who live job-work, are a queer lot; and this may not be his name, but it's the name goes by. I remember now, sir, that he gives it in a written advertisement he sti up down at the Rule Office, and the King's Bench Office, and the Judges' Ch *bers, and so forth.* You know the kind of document, sir—wanting employ?"

[redacted]

Mr. Tulkinghorn glances through the little window at the back of Coavinses', the sheriff's officer's, where lights shine in Coavinses' windows. Coavinses' coffee-room is at the back, and the shadows of several gentlemen under a cloud loom cloudily upon the blinds. Mr. Snagsby takes the opportunity of slightly turning his head, to glance over his shoulder at his little woman, and to make apologetic motions with his mouth to this effect: "Tul-king-horn—rich—in-flu-en-tial!"

"Have you given this man work before!" asks Mr. Tulkinghorn.

"O dear, yes, sir! Work of yours."

"Thinking of more important matters, I forget where you said he lived?"

"Across the lane, sir. In fact, he lodges at a—" Mr. Snagsby makes another bolt, as if the bit of bread-and-butter were insurmountable—"at a rag and bottle shop."

"Can you show me the place as I go back?"

"With the greatest pleasure, sir!"

Mr. Snagsby pulls off his sleeves and his grey coat, pulls on his black coat, takes his hat from its peg. "Oh! here is my little woman!" he says aloud. "My dear, will you be so kind as to tell one of the lads to look after the shop, while I step across the lane with Mr. Tulkinghorn? Mrs. Snagsby, sir—I shan't be two minutes, my love!"

Mrs. Snagsby bends to the lawyer, retires behind the counter, peeps at them through the window-blind, goes softly into the back office, refers to the entries in the book still lying open. Is evidently curious.

"You will find that the place is rough, sir," says Mr. Snagsby, walking deferentially in the road, and leaving the narrow pavement to the lawyer; "and the party is very rough. But they're a wild lot in general, sir. The advantage of this particular man is, that he never wants sleep. He'll go at it right on end, if you want him to, as long as ever you like."

It is quite dark now, and the gas-lamps have acquired their full effect. Jostling against clerks going to post the day's letters, and against counsel and attorneys going home to dinner, and against plaintiffs and defendants, and suitors of all sorts, and against the general crowd, in whose way the forensic wisdom of ages has interposed a million of obstacles to the transaction of the commonest business of life—diving through law and equity, and through that kindred mystery, the street mud, which is made of nobody knows what, and collects about us nobody knows whence or how: we only knowing in general that when there is too much of it, we find it necessary to shovel it away—the lawyer and the law-stationer come to a Rag and Bottle shop, and general emporium of much disregarded merchandise, lying and being in the shadow of the wall of Lincoln's Inn, and kept, as is announced in paint, to all whom it may concern, by one Krook.

"This is where he lives, sir," says the law-stationer.

"This is where he lives, is it?" says the lawyer unconcernedly. "Thank you."

"Are you not going in, sir?"

"No, thank you, no: I am going on to the Fields at present. Good evening. Thank you!" Mr. Snagsby lifts his hat, and returns to his little woman and his tea.

But Mr. Tulkinghorn does not go on to the Fields at present. He goes a short way, turns back, comes again to the shop of Mr. Krook, and enters it straight. It is dim enough, with a blot-headed candle or so in the windows, and an old man and a cat sitting in the back part by a fire. The old man rises and comes forward, with another blot-headed candle in his hand.

"Pray is your lodger within?"

"Male or female, sir?" says Mr. Krook.

"Male. The *person who does copying.*"

Mr. Krook has eyed his man narrowly. Knows him by sight. Has an indistinct impression of his aristocratic repute.

"Did you wish to see him, sir?"

"Yes."

"It's what I seldom do myself," says Mr. Krook with a grin. "Shall I call him down? But it's a weak chance if he'd come, sir!"

"I'll go up to him, then," says Mr. Tulkinghorn.

"Second floor, sir. Take the candle. Up there!" Mr. Krook, with his cat beside him, stands at the bottom of the staircase, looking after Mr. Tulkinghorn. "Hi—hi!" he says, when Mr. Tulkinghorn has nearly disappeared. The lawyer looks down over the hand-rail. The cat expands her wicked mouth, and snarls at him.

"Order, Lady Jane! Behave yourself to visitors, my lady! You know what they say of my lodger?" whispers Krook, going up a step or two.

"What do they say of him?"

"They say he has sold himself to the Enemy; but you and I know better—he don't buy. I'll tell you what, though; my lodger is so black-humoured and gloomy, that I believe he'd as soon make that bargain as any other. Don't put him out, sir. That's my advice!"

Mr. Tulkinghorn with a nod goes on his way. He comes to the dark door on the second floor. He knocks, receives no answer, opens it, and accidentally extinguishes his candle in doing so.

The air of the room is almost bad enough to have extinguished it, if he had not. It is a small room, nearly black with soot, and grease, and dirt. In the rusty skeleton of a grate, pinched at the middle as if Poverty had gripped it, a red coke fire burns low. In the corner by the chimney, stand a deal table and a broken desk; a wilderness marked with a rain of ink. In another corner, a ragged old portmanteau on one of the two chairs, serves for cabinet or wardrobe; no larger one is needed, for it collapses like the cheeks of a starved man. The floor is bare; except that one old mat, trodden to shreds of rope-yarn, lies perishing upon the hearth. No curtain veils the darkness of the night, but the discoloured shutters are drawn together; and through the two gaunt holes pierced in them, famine might be staring in—the Banshee of the man upon the bed.

For, on a low bed opposite the fire, a confusion of dirty patchwork, lean-ribbed ticking, and coarse sacking, the lawyer, hesitating just within the doorway, sees a man. He lies there, dressed in shirt and trousers, with bare feet. He has a yellow look in the spectral darkness of a candle that has guttered down, until the whole length of its wick (still burning) has doubled over, and left a tower of winding-sheet above it. His hair is ragged, mingling with his whiskers and his beard—the latter, ragged too, and grown, like the scum and mist around him, in neglect. Foul and filthy as the room is, foul and filthy as the air is, it is not easy to perceive what fumes those are which most oppress the senses in it; but through the general sickliness and faintness, and the odour of stale tobacco, there comes into the lawyer's mouth the bitter, vapid taste of opium.

"Hallo, my friend!" he cries, and strikes his iron candlestick against the door.

He thinks he has awakened his friend. He lies a little turned away, but his eyes are surely open.

"Hallo, my friend!" he cries again. "Hallo! Hallo!"

As he rattles on the door, the candle which has drooped so long, goes out, and leaves him in the dark; with the gaunt eyes in the shutters staring down upon the bed.

CHAPTER XI.

OUR DEAR BROTHER.

on the lawyer's wrinkled hand, as he stands in the dark room, irresolute,
n start and say "What's that?"
ne," returns the old man of the house, whose breath is in his ear.
ou wake him?"

: have you done with your candle?"
one out. Here it is."
takes it, goes to the fire, stoops over the red embers, and tries to get a
ne dying ashes have no light to spare, and his endeavours are vain.
, after an ineffectual call to his lodger, that he will go down-stairs and
hted candle from the shop, the old man departs. Mr. Tulkinghorn,
new reason that he has, does not await his return in the room, but on
outside.
lcome light soon shines upon the wall, as Krook comes slowly up, with
eyed cat following at his heels. "Does the man generally sleep like
quires the lawyer, in a low voice. "Hi! I don't know," says Krook,
is head and lifting his eyebrows. "I know next to nothing of his
cept that he keeps himself very close."
hispering, they both go in together. As the light goes in, the great
e shutters, darkening, seem to close. Not so the eyes upon the bed.
save us!" exclaims Mr. Tulkinghorn. "He is dead!"
drops the heavy hand he has taken up, so suddenly that the arm swings
edside.
ok at one another for a moment.
for some doctor! Call for Miss Flite up the stairs, sir. Here's poison
d! Call out for Flite, will you?" says Krook, with his lean hands
t above the body like a vampire's wings.
lkinghorn hurries to the landing, and calls "Miss Flite! Flite! Make
e, whoever you are! Flite!" Krook follows him with his eyes, and,
s calling, finds opportunity to steal to the old portmanteau, and steal
a.
Flite, run! The nearest doctor! Run!" So Mr. Krook addresses
tle woman, who is his female lodger: who appears and vanishes in a
ho soon returns, accompanied by a testy medical man, brought from
—with a broad snuffy upper lip, and a broad Scotch tongue.
Bless the hearts o' ye," says the medical man, looking up at them after
's examination. "He's just as dead as Phairy!"
lkinghorn (standing by the old portmanteau) inquires if he has been
time?
ime, sir?" says the medical gentleman. "It's probable he wull have
aboot three hours."
t that time, I should say," observes a dark young man, on the other
bed.
ou in the maydickle prayfession yourself, sir?" inquires the first.
k young man says yes.
I'd just tak' my depairture," replies the other; "for I'm nae gude here!"
h *remark, he finishes his brief* attendance, and returns to finish his dinner.

The dark young surgeon passes the candle across and across the face, and carefully examines the law-writer, who has established his pretensions to his name by becoming indeed No one.

"I knew this person by sight, very well," says he. "He has purchased opium of me, for the last year and a half. Was anybody present related to him?" glancing round upon the three bystanders.

"I was his landlord," grimly answers Krook, taking the candle from the surgeon's outstretched hand. "He told me once, I was the nearest relation he had."

"He has died," says the surgeon, "of an over-dose of opium, there is no doubt. The room is strongly flavoured with it. There is enough here now," taking an old teapot from Mr. Krook, "to kill a dozen people."

"Do you think he did it on purpose?" asks Krook.

"Took the over-dose?"

"Yes!" Krook almost smacks his lips with the unction of a horrible interest.

"I can't say I should think it unlikely, as he has been in the habit of taking so much. But nobody can tell. He was very poor, I suppose?"

"I suppose he was. His room—don't look rich," says Krook, who might have changed eyes with his cat, as he casts his sharp glance around. "But I have never been in it since he had it, and he was too close to name his circumstances to me."

"Did he owe you any rent?"

"Six weeks."

"He will never pay it!" says the young man, resuming his examination. "It is beyond a doubt that he is indeed as dead as Pharaoh; and to judge from his appearance and condition, I should think it a happy release. Yet he must have been a good figure when a youth, and I dare say, good-looking." He says this, not unfeelingly, while sitting on the bedstead's edge, with his face towards that other face, and his hand upon the region of the heart. "I recollect once thinking there was something in his manner, uncouth as it was, that denoted a fall in life. Was that so?" he continues, looking round.

Krook replies, "You might as well ask me to describe the ladies whose heads of hair I have got in sacks down-stairs. Than that he was my lodger for a year and a half, and lived—or didn't live—by law-writing, I know no more of him."

During this dialogue, Mr. Tulkinghorn has stood aloof by the old portmanteau, with his hands behind him, equally removed, to all appearance, from all three kinds of interest exhibited near the bed—from the young surgeon's professional interest in death, noticeable as being quite apart from his remarks on the deceased as an individual; from the old man's unction; and the little crazy woman's awe. His imperturbable face has been as inexpressive as his rusty clothes. One could not even say he has been thinking all this while. He has shown neither patience nor impatience, nor attention nor abstraction. He has shown nothing but his shell. As easily might the tone of a delicate musical instrument be inferred from its case, as the tone of Mr. Tulkinghorn from *his* case.

He now interposes: addressing the young surgeon, in his unmoved, professional way.

"I looked in here," he observes, "just before you, with the intention of giving this deceased man, whom I never saw alive, some employment at his trade of copying. I had heard of him from my stationer—Snagsby of Cook's Court. Since no one here knows anything about him, it might be as well to send for Snagsby. Ah!" to the little crazy woman, who has often seen him in Court, and whom he has often seen, and who proposes, in frightened dumb-show, to go *for the law-stationer*. "Suppose you do!"

While she is gone, the surgeon abandons his hopeless investigation, and covers the subject with the patchwork counterpane. Mr. Krook and he interchange a word or two. Mr. Tulkinghorn says nothing; but stands, ever, near the old portmanteau.

Mr. Snagsby arrives hastily, in his grey coat and his black sleeves. "Dear me, dear me," he says; "and it has come to this, has it! Bless my soul!"

"Can you give the person of the house any information about this unfortunate creature, Snagsby?" inquires Mr. Tulkinghorn. "He was in arrears with his rent, it seems. And he must be buried, you know."

"Well, sir," says Mr. Snagsby, coughing his apologetic cough behind his hand; "I really don't know what advice I could offer, except sending for the beadle."

"I don't speak of advice," returns Mr. Tulkinghorn. "*I* could advise——"

("No one better, sir, I am sure," says Mr. Snagsby, with his deferential cough.)

"I speak of affording some clue to his connexions, or to where he came from, or to anything concerning him."

"I assure you, sir," says Mr. Snagsby, after prefacing his reply with his cough of general propitiation, "that I no more know where he came from than I know——"

"Where he has gone to, perhaps," suggests the surgeon, to help him out.

A pause. Mr. Tulkinghorn looking at the law-stationer. Mr. Krook, with his mouth open, looking for somebody to speak next.

"As to his connexions, sir," says Mr. Snagsby, "if a person was to say to me, 'Snagsby, here's twenty thousand pound down, ready for you in the Bank of England, if you'll only name one of 'em,' I couldn't do it, sir! About a year and a half ago—to the best of my belief at the time when he first came to lodge at the present rag and bottle shop—"

"That was the time!" says Krook, with a nod.

"About a year and a half ago," says Mr. Snagsby, strengthened, "he came into our place one morning after breakfast, and, finding my little woman (which I name Mrs. Snagsby when I use that appellation) in our shop, produced a specimen of his handwriting, and gave her to understand that he was in want of copying work to do, and was not to put too fine a point upon it" (a favourite apology for plain-speaking with Mr. Snagsby, which he always offers with a sort of argumentative frankness, "hard up! My little woman is not in general partial to strangers, particular—not to put too fine a point upon it—when they want anything. But she was rather took by something about this person: whether by his being unshaved, or by his hair being in want of attention, or by what other ladies' reasons, I leave you to judge; and she accepted of the specimen, and likewise of the address. My little woman hasn't a good ear for names," proceeds Mr. Snagsby, after consulting his cough of consideration behind his hand, "and she considered Nemo equally the same as Nimrod. In consequence of which, she got into a habit of saying to me at meals, 'Mr. Snagsby, you haven't found Nimrod any work yet!' or 'Mr. Snagsby, why didn't you give that eight-and-thirty Chancery folio in Jarndyce to Nimrod?' or such like. And that is the way he gradually fell into job-work at our place; and that is the most I know of him, except that he was a quick hand, and a hand not sparing of night-work; and that if you gave him out, say exactly by five o'clock on the Wednesday night, you would have it brought in on the Thursday morning. All of which—" Mr. Snagsby concludes by politely motioning with his hat towards the bed, as much as to add, "I have no doubt my honourable friend would confirm, if he were in a condition to do it."

"Hadn't you better see," says Mr. Tulkinghorn to Krook, "whether he had

any papers that may enlighten you? There will be an Inquest, and you will be asked the question. You can read?"

"No, I can't," returns the old man, with a sudden grin.

"Snagsby," says Mr. Tulkinghorn, "look over the room for him. He will get into some trouble or difficulty, otherwise. Being here, I'll wait, if you make haste; and then I can testify on his behalf, if it should ever be necessary, that all was fair and right. If you will hold the candle for Mr. Snagsby, my friend, he'll soon see whether there is anything to help you."

"In the first place, here's an old portmanteau, sir," says Snagsby.

Ah, to be sure, so there is! Mr. Tulkinghorn does not appear to have seen it before, though he is standing so close to it, and though there is very little else, Heaven knows.

The marine-store merchant holds the light, and the law-stationer conducts the search. The surgeon leans against the corner of the chimney-piece; Miss Flite peeps and trembles just within the door. The apt old scholar of the old school, with his dull black breeches tied with ribbons at the knees, his large black waistcoat, his long-sleeved black coat, and his wisp of limp white neckerchief tied in the bow the Peerage knows so well, stands in exactly the same place and attitude.

There are some worthless articles of clothing in the old portmanteau; there is a bundle of pawnbrokers' duplicates, those turnpike tickets on the road of Poverty; there is a crumpled paper, smelling of opium, on which are scrawled rough memoranda—as, took, such a day, so many grains: took, such another day, so many more— begun some time ago, as if with the intention of being regularly continued, but soon left off. There are a few dirty scraps of newspapers, all referring to Coroners' Inquests; there is nothing else. They search the cupboard, and the drawer of the ink-splashed table. There is not a morsel of an old letter, or of any other writing, in either. The young surgeon examines the dress on the Law-writer. A knife and some odd halfpence are all he finds. Mr. Snagsby's suggestion is the practical suggestion after all, and the beadle must be called in.

So the little crazy lodger goes for the beadle, and the rest come out of the room. "Don't leave the cat there!" says the surgeon: "that won't do!" Mr. Krook therefore drives her out before him; and she goes furtively down-stairs, winding her lithe tail and licking her lips.

"Good night!" says Mr. Tulkinghorn; and goes home to Allegory and meditation.

By this time the news has got into the court. Groups of its inhabitants assemble to discuss the thing; and the outposts of the army of observation (principally boys) are pushed forward to Mr. Krook's window, which they closely invest. A policeman has already walked up to the room, and walked down again to the door, where he stands like a tower, only condescending to see the boys at his base occasionally; but whenever he does see them, they quail and fall back. Mrs. Perkins, who has not been for some weeks on speaking terms with Mrs. Piper, in consequence of an unpleasantness originating in young Perkins having "fetched" young Piper "a crack," renews her friendly intercourse on this auspicious occasion. The potboy at the corner, who is a privileged amateur, as possessing official knowledge of life, and having to deal with drunken men occasionally, exchanges confidential communications with the policeman, and has the appearance of an impregnable youth, unassailable by truncheons and unconfinable in station-houses. People talk across the court out of window, and bareheaded scouts come hurrying in from Chancery Lane to know what's the matter. The general feeling seems to be that it's a blessing Mr. Krook warn't made away with first, mingled with a little natural disappointment that he was not. In the midst of this sensation, the beadle arrives.

beadle, though generally understood in the neighbourhood to be a
us institution, is not without a certain popularity for the moment, if it were
a man who is going to see the body. The policeman considers him an
e civilian, a remnant of the barbarous watchmen-times; but gives him
on, as something that must be borne with until Government shall abolish
The sensation is heightened, as the tidings spread from mouth to mouth
: beadle is on the ground, and has gone in.
nd-by the beadle comes out, once more intensifying the sensation, which
her languished in the interval. He is understood to be in want of wit-
for the Inquest to-morrow, who can tell the Coroner and Jury anything
er respecting the deceased. Is immediately referred to innumerable people
n tell nothing whatever. Is made more imbecile by being constantly
d that Mrs. Green's son "was a law-writer his-self, and knowed him
han anybody"—which son of Mrs. Green's appears, on inquiry, to be at
sent time aboard a vessel bound for China, three months out, but con-
accessible by telegraph, on application to the Lords of the Admiralty.
goes into various shops and parlours, examining the inhabitants; always
g the door first, and by exclusion, delay, and general idiotcy, exasperating
blic. Policeman seen to smile to potboy. Public loses interest, and
oes reaction. Taunts the beadle, in shrill youthful voices, with having
a boy; chorusses fragments of a popular song to that effect, and importing
: boy was made into soup for the workhouse. Policeman at last finds it
ry to support the law, and seize a vocalist; who is released upon the
f the rest, on condition of his getting out of this then, come! and cutting
ondition he immediately observes. So the sensation dies off for the time;
: unmoved policeman (to whom a little opium, more or less, is nothing),
s shining hat, stiff stock, inflexible great-coat, stout belt and bracelet, and
gs fitting, pursues his lounging way with a heavy tread: beating the palms
hite gloves one against the other, and stopping now and then, at a street-
to look casually about for anything between a lost child and a murder.
:r cover of the night, the feeble-minded beadle comes flitting about
ry Lane with his summonses, in which every Juror's name is wrongly
id nothing rightly spelt but the beadle's own name, which nobody can read
ts to know. The summonses served, and his witnesses forewarned, the
goes to Mr. Krook's, to keep a small appointment he has made with
paupers; who, presently arriving, are conducted up-stairs; where they
ie great eyes in the shutter something new to stare at, in that last shape
earthly lodgings take for No one—and for Every one.
, all that night, the coffin stands ready by the old portmanteau; and the
igure on the bed, whose path in life has lain through five-and-forty years,
re, with no more track behind him, that any one can trace, than a deserted

day the court is all alive—is like a fair, as Mrs. Perkins, more than
led to Mrs. Piper, says, in amicable conversation with that excellent
. The Coroner is to sit in the first-floor room at the Sol's Arms, where the
nic Meetings take place twice a-week, and where the chair is filled by a
nan of professional celebrity, faced by Little Swills, the comic vocalist,
pes (according to the bill in the window) that his friends will rally round
nd support first-rate talent. The Sol's Arms does a brisk stroke of
s all the morning. Even children so require sustaining, under the general
ient, that a pieman who has established himself for the occasion at the
of the court, says his brandy-balls go off like smoke. What time the
hovering between the door of Mr. Krook's establishment and the door of

the Sol's Arms, shows the curiosity in his keeping to a few discreet
accepts the compliment of a glass of ale or so in return.

At the appointed hour arrives the Coroner, for whom the Jurymen a
and who is received with a salute of skittles from the good dry ski
attached to the Sol's Arms. The Coroner frequents more public-house
man alive. The smell of sawdust, beer, tobacco-smoke, and spirits, is
in his vocation from death in its most awful shapes. He is conduc
beadle and the landlord to the Harmonic Meeting Room, where he p
on the piano, and takes a Windsor-chair at the head of a long table,
several short tables put together, and ornamented with glutinous rings
involutions, made by pots and glasses. As many of the Jury as
together at the table sit there. The rest get among the spittoons an
lean against the piano. Over the Coroner's head is a small iron g
pendant handle of a bell, which rather gives the Majesty of the Court t
ance of going to be hanged presently.

Call over and swear the Jury! While the ceremony is in progress, s
created by the entrance of a chubby little man in a large shirt-collar, wi
eye, and an inflamed nose, who modestly takes a position near the doo
the general public, but seems familiar with the room too. A whisper
that this is Little Swills. It is considered not unlikely that he will
imitation of the Coroner, and make it the principal feature of the
Meeting in the evening.

"Well, gentlemen—" the Coroner begins.

"Silence there, will you!" says the beadle. Not to the coroner,
might appear so.

"Well, gentlemen," resumes the Coroner. "You are impanelled h
quire into the death of a certain man. Evidence will be given before
the circumstances attending that death, and you will give your verdict a
the—skittles; they must be stopped, you know, beadle!—evidence, ar
cording to anything else. The first thing to be done, is to view the bo
"Make way there!" cries the beadle.

So they go out in a loose procession, something after the manner
gling funeral, and make their inspection in Mr. Krook's back second
which a few of the Jurymen retire pale and precipitately. The bead
careful that two gentlemen not very neat about the cuffs and buttons
accommodation he has provided a special little table near the Coroner, i
monic Meeting Room) should see all that is to be seen. For they are
chroniclers of such inquiries, by the line; and he is not superior to the
human infirmity, but hopes to read in print what "Mooney, the active
gent beadle of the district," said and did; and even aspires to see the
Mooney as familiarly and patronisingly mentioned as the name of the
is, according to the latest examples.

Little Swills is waiting for the Coroner and Jury on their return. Mr
horn, also. Mr. Tulkinghorn is received with distinction, and seated ne
roner; between that high judicial officer, a bagatelle-board, and the coal
inquiry proceeds. The Jury learn how the subject of their inquiry died,
no more about him. "A very eminent solicitor is in attendance, ge
says the Coroner, "who, I am informed, was accidentally present, when
of the death was made; but he could only repeat the evidence you ha
heard from the surgeon, the landlord, the lodger, and the law-stationer
not necessary to trouble him. Is anybody in attendance who knows
more?"

Mrs. Piper pushed forward by Mrs. Perkins. Mrs. Piper sworn.

a Piper, gentlemen. Married woman. Now, Mrs. Piper—what have say about this?

Mrs. Piper has a good deal to say, chiefly in parentheses and without n, but not much to tell. Mrs. Piper lives in the court (which her hus- abinet-maker), and it has long been well beknown among the neigh- nting from the day next but one before the half-baptising of Alexander er aged eighteen months and four days old on accounts of not being ex- live such was the sufferings gentlemen of that child in his gums) as the —so Mrs. Piper insists on calling the deceased—was reported to have lf. Thinks it was the Plaintive's air in which that report originatinin. Plaintive often and considered as his air was feariocious and not to be go about some children being timid (and if doubted hoping Mrs. Per- be brought forard for she is here and will do credit to her husband and l family). Has seen the Plaintive wexed and worrited by the children en they will ever be and you cannot expect them specially if of playful s to be Methoozellers which you was not yourself). On accounts of this k looks has often dreamed as she see him take a pick-axe from his poc- lit Johnny's head (which the child knows not fear and has repeatually r him close at his eels). Never however see the Plaintive take a pick- other wepping far from it. Has seen him hurry away when run and r as if not partial to children and never see him speak to neither child person at any time (excepting the boy that sweeps the crossing down ver the way round the corner which if he was here would tell you that en seen a-speaking to him frequent).

e Coroner, is that boy here? Says the beadle, no, sir, he is not here. Coroner, go and fetch him then. In the absence of the active and intelli- Coroner converses with Mr. Tulkinghorn.

re's the boy, gentlemen!

e is, very muddy, very hoarse, very ragged. Now, boy!—But stop a Caution. This boy must be put through a few preliminary paces.

Jo. Nothing else that he knows on. Don't know that everybody has s. Never heerd of sich a think. Don't know that Jo is short for a me. Thinks it long enough for *him*. *He* don't find no fault with it. No. *He* can't spell it. No father, no mother, no friends. Never been What's home? Knows a broom 's a broom, and knows it's wicked to Don't recollect who told him about the broom, or about the lie, but h. Can't exactly say what'll be done to him arter he's dead if he tells he gentlemen here, but believes it'll be something wery bad to punish serve him right—and so he'll tell the truth.

won't do, gentlemen!" says the Coroner, with a melancholy shake of

you think you can receive his evidence, sir?" asks an attentive Juryman.

f the question," says the Coroner. "You have heard the boy. 'Can't y' won't do, you know. We can't take *that*, in a Court of Justice, gen- It's terrible depravity. Put the boy aside."

t aside; to the great edification of the audience;—especially of Little e Comic Vocalist.

Is there any other witness? No other witness.

ell, gentlemen! Here's a man unknown, proved to have been in the aking opium in large quantities for a year and a half, found dead of too m. If you think you have any evidence to lead you to the conclusion mmitted suicide, you will come to that conclusion. If you think it is a cidental death, you will find a Verdict accordingly.

Verdict accordingly. Accidental death. No doubt. Gentlemen, you are discharged. Good afternoon.

While the Coroner buttons his great-coat, Mr. Tulkinghorn and he give private audience to the rejected witness in a corner.

That graceless creature only knows that the dead man (whom he recognised just now by his yellow face and black hair) was sometimes hooted and pursued about the streets. That one cold winter night, when he, the boy, was shivering in a doorway near his crossing, the man turned to look at him, and came back, and, having questioned him and found that he had not a friend in the world, said, "Neither have I. Not one!" and gave him the price of a supper and a night's lodging. That the man had often spoken to him since; and asked him whether he slept sound at night, and how he bore cold and hunger, and whether he ever wished to die; and similar strange questions. That when the man had no money, he would say in passing, "I am as poor as you to-day, Jo;" but that when he had any, he had always (as the boy most heartily believes) been glad to give him some.

"He was wery good to me," says the boy, wiping his eyes with his wretched sleeve. "Wen I see him a-layin' so stritched out just now, I wished he could have heerd me tell him so. He wos wery good to me, he wos!"

As he shuffles down-stairs, Mr. Snagsby, lying in wait for him, puts a half-crown in his hand. "If you ever see me coming past your crossing with my little woman—I mean a lady—" says Mr. Snagsby, with his finger on his nose, "don't allude to it!"

For some little time the Jurymen hang about the Sol's Arms colloquially. In the sequel, half-a-dozen are caught up in a cloud of pipe-smoke that pervades the parlour of the Sol's Arms: two stroll to Hampstead; and four engage to go half-price to the play at night, and top up with oysters. Little Swills is treated on several hands. Being asked what he thinks of the proceedings, characterises them (his strength lying in a slangular direction) as "a rummy start." The landlord of the Sol's Arms, finding Little Swills so popular, commends him highly to the Jurymen and public; observing that, for a song in character, he don't know his equal, and that that man's character-wardrobe would fill a cart.

Thus, gradually the Sol's Arms melts into the shadowy night, and then flares out of it strong in gas. The Harmonic Meeting hour arriving, the gentleman of professional celebrity takes the chair; is faced (red-faced) by Little Swills; their friends rally round them, and support first-rate talent. In the zenith of the evening, Little Swills says, Gentlemen, if you'll permit me, I'll attempt a short description of a scene of real life that came off here to-day. Is much applauded and encouraged; goes out of the room as Swills; comes in as the Coroner not the least in the world like him); describes the Inquest, with recreative intervals of piano-forte accompaniment to the refrain—With his (the Coroner's) tippy tol li doll, tippy tol lo doll, tippy tol li doll, Dee!

The jingling piano at last is silent, and the Harmonic friends rally round their pillows. Then there is rest around the lonely figure, now laid in its last earthly habitation; and it is watched by the gaunt eyes in the shutters through some quiet hours of night. If this forlorn man could have been prophetically seen lying here, by the mother at whose breast he nestled, a little child, with eyes upraised to her loving face, and soft hand scarcely knowing how to close upon the neck to which it crept, what an impossibility the vision would have seemed! O, if, in brighter days, the now-extinguished fire within him ever burned for one woman who held him in her heart, where is she, while these ashes are above the ground!

It is anything but a night of rest at Mr. Snagsby's, in Cook's Court: where *Guster murders sleep*, by going, as Mr. Snagsby himself allows—not to put too

t upon it—out of one fit into twenty. The occasion of this seizure is, r has a tender heart, and a susceptible something that possibly might imagination, but for Tooting and her patron saint. Be it what it may, s so direfully impressed at tea-time by Mr. Snagsby's account of the which he had assisted, that at supper-time she projected herself into the receded by a flying Dutch-cheese, and fell into a fit of unusual duration: only came out of to go into another, and another, and so on through a ts, with short intervals between, of which she has pathetically availed consuming them in entreaties to Mrs. Snagsby not to give her warning e quite comes to ;" and also in appeals to the whole establishment to wn on the stones, and go to bed. Hence, Mr. Snagsby, at last hearing t the little dairy in Cursitor Street go into that disinterested ecstasy of e subject of daylight, says, drawing a long breath, though the most men, "I thought you was dead, I am sure!"

uestion this enthusiastic fowl supposes he settles when he strains himself extent, or why he should thus crow (so men crow on various triumphant asions, however) about what cannot be of any moment to him, is his is enough that daylight comes, morning comes, noon comes.

e active and intelligent, who has got into the morning papers as such, a his pauper company to Mr. Krook's, and bears off the body of our dear ere departed, to a hemmed-in churchyard, pestiferous and obscene, alignant diseases are communicated to the bodies of our dear brothers who have not departed; while our dear brothers and sisters who hang ial back-stairs—would to Heaven they *had* departed!—are very com- d agreeable. Into a beastly scrap of ground which a Turk would reject e abomination, and a Caffre would shudder at, they bring our dear re departed, to receive Christian burial.

uses looking on, on every side, save where a reeking little tunnel of a s access to the iron gate—with every villainy of life in action close on every poisonous element of death in action close on life—here, they dear brother down a foot or two: here, sow him in corruption, to be corruption: an avenging ghost at many a sick-bedside: a shameful to future ages, how civilisation and barbarism walked this boastful ther.

ight, come darkness, for you cannot come too soon, or stay too long, by ace as this! Come, straggling lights into the windows of the ugly nd you who do iniquity therein, do it at least with this dread scene shut ne, flame of gas, burning so sullenly above the iron gate, on which the ir deposits its witch-ointment slimy to the touch! It is well that you l to every passer-by, "Look here!"

e night, comes a slouching figure through the tunnel-court, to the out- iron gate. It holds the gate with its hands, and looks in between the ds looking in, for a little while.

with an old broom it carries, softly sweeps the step, and makes the lean. It does so, very busily and trimly; looks in again, a little while; arts.

thou? Well, well! Though a rejected witness, who "can't exactly will be done to him in greater hands than men's, thou art not quite in ness. There is something like a distant ray of light in thy muttered this:

as wery good to me, he wos!"

CHAPTER XII.

ON THE WATCH.

It has left off raining down in Lincolnshire, at last, and Chesney Wo taken heart. Mrs. Rouncewell is full of hospitable cares, for Sir Leices my Lady are coming home from Paris. The fashionable intelligence has f out, and communicates the glad tidings to benighted England. It has als out, that they will entertain a brilliant and distinguished circle of the *élite beau monde* (the fashionable intelligence is weak in English, but a giant re in French), at the ancient and hospitable family seat in Lincolnshire.

For the greater honour of the brilliant and distinguished circle, and of C Wold into the bargain, the broken arch of the bridge in the park is mende the water, now retired within its proper limits and again spanned gracefully, a figure in the prospect from the house. The clear cold sunshine glances i brittle woods, and approvingly beholds the sharp wind scattering the lea drying the moss. It glides over the park after the moving shadows of the and chases them, and never catches them, all day. It looks in at the wi and touches the ancestral portraits with bars and patches of brightness, ne templated by the painters. Athwart the picture of my Lady, over th chimney-piece, it throws a broad bend-sinister of light that strikes down cr into the hearth, and seems to rend it.

Through the same cold sunshine, and the same sharp wind, my Lady Leicester, in their travelling chariot (my Lady's woman, and Sir Leiceste affectionate in the rumble), start for home. With a considerable amount ling and whip-cracking, and many plunging demonstrations on the part bare-backed horses, and two Centaurs with glazed hats, jack-boots, and manes and tails, they rattle out of the yard of the Hôtel Bristol in th Vendôme, and canter between the sun-and-shadow-chequered colonnade Rue de Rivoli and the garden of the ill-fated palace of a headless king an off by the Place of Concord, and the Elysian Fields, and the Gate of the S of Paris.

Sooth to say, they cannot go away too fast; for, even here, my Lady has been bored to death. Concert, assembly, opera, theatre, drive, nothin to my Lady, under the worn-out heavens. Only last Sunday, when poor were gay—within the walls, playing with children among the clipped tr the statues in the Palace Garden; walking, a score abreast, in the Elysian made more Elysian by performing dogs and wooden horses; between whil ing (a few) through the gloomy Cathedral of our Lady, to say a word o the base of a pillar, within flare of a rusty little gridiron-full of gusty little t without the walls, encompassing Paris with dancing, love-making, wine-d tobacco-smoking, tomb-visiting, billiard card and domino playing, quack ing, and much murderous refuse, animate and inanimate—only last Sun Lady, in the desolation of Boredom and the clutch of Giant Despair, hated her own maid for being in spirits.

She cannot, therefore, go too fast from Paris. Weariness of soul lies bef as it lies behind—her Ariel has put a girdle of it round the whole earth cannot be unclasped—but the imperfect remedy is always to fly, from place where it has been experienced. Fling Paris back into the distanc exchanging it for endless avenues and cross-avenues of wintry trees! An next beheld, let it be some leagues away, with the Gate of the Star a whit

in the sun, and the city a mere mound in a plain: two dark square
ing out of it, and light and shadow descending on it aslant, like the
Jacob's dream!
ester is generally in a complacent state, and rarely bored. When he
g else to do, he can always contemplate his own greatness. It is a
le advantage to a man, to have so inexhaustible a subject. After
s letters, he leans back in his corner of the carriage, and generally
s importance to society.
have an unusual amount of correspondence this morning?" says my
r a long time. She is fatigued with reading. Has almost read a page
miles.
ng in it, though. Nothing whatever."
one of Mr. Tulkinghorn's long effusions, I think?"
ee everything," says Sir Leicester, with admiration.
sighs my Lady. "He is the most tiresome of men!"
nds—I really beg your pardon—he sends," says Sir Leicester, selecting
and unfolding it, "a message to you. Our stopping to change horses,
to his postscript, drove it out of my memory. I beg you'll excuse me.
" Sir Leicester is so long in taking out his eye-glass and adjusting it,
ady looks a little irritated. "He says 'In the matter of the right of
beg your pardon, that's not the place. He says—yes! Here I have it!
'I beg my respectful compliments to my Lady, who, I hope, has
by the change. Will you do me the favour to mention (as it may
r), that I have something to tell her on her return, in reference to the
o copied the affidavit in the Chancery suit, which so powerfully stimu-
curiosity. I have seen him.'"
ly, leaning forward, looks out of her window.
the message," observes Sir Leicester.
ld like to walk a little," says my Lady, still looking out of her window.
?" repeats Sir Leicester, in a tone of surprise.
ld like to walk a little," says my Lady, with unmistakable distinctness.
o stop the carriage."
riage is stopped, the affectionate man alights from the rumble, opens the
lets down the steps, obedient to an impatient motion of my Lady's
ly Lady alights so quickly, and walks away so quickly, that Sir
for all his scrupulous politeness, is unable to assist her, and is left
A space of a minute or two has elapsed before he comes up with her.
s, looks very handsome, takes his arm, lounges with him for a quarter of
very much bored, and resumes her seat in the carriage.
le and clatter continue through the greater part of three days, with more
bell-jingling and whip-cracking, and more or less plunging of Centaurs
backed horses. Their courtly politeness to each other, at the Hotels
y tarry, is the theme of general admiration. Though my Lord *is* a little
ıy Lady, says Madame, the hostess of the Golden Ape, and though he
ıer amiable father, one can see at a glance that they love each other.
ves my Lord with his white hair, standing, hat in hand, to help my Lady
m the carriage. One observes my Lady, how recognisant of my Lord's
, with an inclination of her gracious head, and the concession of her so-
igers! It is ravishing!
has no appreciation of great men, but knocks them about like the small
habitually hard upon Sir Leicester, whose countenance it greenly
the manner of sage-cheese, and in whose aristocratic system it effects a
olution. It is *the Radical of Nature* to him. Nevertheless, his dignity

gets over it, after stopping to refit: and he goes on with my Lady fo
Wold, lying only one night in London on the way to Lincolnshire.

Through the same cold sunlight—colder as the day declines,—and th
same sharp wind—sharper as the separate shadows of bare trees gloo
in the woods, and as the Ghost's Walk, touched at the western corner b
fire in the sky, resigns itself to coming night,—they drive into the p
Rooks, swinging in their lofty houses in the elm-tree avenue, seem to
question of the occupancy of the carriage as it passes underneath; som
that Sir Leicester and my Lady are come down; some arguing with m
who won't admit it; now, all consenting to consider the question dis
now, all breaking out again in violent debate, incited by one obstinate a
bird, who will persist in putting in a last contradictory croak. Leavin
swing and caw, the travelling chariot rolls on to the house; where f
warmly through some of the windows, though not through so many as
inhabited expression to the darkening mass of front. But the brilliant
guished circle will soon do that.

Mrs. Rouncewell is in attendance, and receives Sir Leicester's custom
of the hand with a profound curtsey.

"How do you do, Mrs. Rouncewell? I am glad to see you."

"I hope I have the honour of welcoming you in good health, Sir L

"In excellent health, Mrs. Rouncewell."

"My Lady is looking charmingly well," says Mrs. Rouncewell, wi
curtsey.

My Lady signifies, without profuse expenditure of words, that she is
well as she can hope to be.

But Rosa is in the distance, behind the housekeeper; and my Lady
not subdued the quickness of her observation, whatever else she may
quered, asks:

"Who is that girl?"

"A young scholar of mine, my Lady. Rosa."

"Come here, Rosa!" Lady Dedlock beckons her, with even an app
interest. "Why, do you know how pretty you are, child?" she says
her shoulder with her two forefingers.

Rosa, very much abashed, says, "No, if you please, my Lady!" an
up, and glances down, and don't know where to look, but looks all the

"How old are you?"

"Nineteen, my Lady."

"Nineteen," repeats my Lady thoughtfully. "Take care they don't
by flattery."

"Yes, my Lady."

My Lady taps her dimpled cheek with the same delicate gloved fi
goes on to the foot of the oak staircase, where Sir Leicester pauses for
knightly escort. A staring old Dedlock in a panel, as large as life an
looks as if he didn't know what to make of it—which was probably hi
state of mind in the days of Queen Elizabeth.

That evening, in the housekeeper's room, Rosa can do nothing
mur Lady Dedlock's praises. She is so affable, so graceful, so
so elegant; has such a sweet voice and such a thrilling touch, th
can feel it yet! Mrs. Rouncewell confirms all this, not without
pride, reserving only the one point of affability. Mrs. Rouncew
quite sure as to that. Heaven forbid that she should say a syllabl
praise of any member of that excellent family; above all, of n
whom the whole world admires; but if my Lady would only be

free," not quite so cold and distant, Mrs. Rouncewell thinks she would be affable.

'Tis almost a pity," Mrs. Rouncewell adds—only "almost," because it borders piety to suppose that anything could be better than it is, in such an express sation as the Dedlock affairs; "that my Lady has no family. If she had daughter now, a grown young lady, to interest her, I think she would have he only kind of excellence she wants."

Hight not that have made her still more proud, grandmother?" says Watt; as been home and come back again, he is such a good grandson.

fore and most, my dear," returns the housekeeper with dignity, "are words t my place to use—nor so much as to hear—applied to any drawback on my "

beg your pardon, grandmother. But she *is* proud, is she not?"

she is, she has reason to be. The Dedlock family have always reason to be." Vell!" says Watt, "it's to be hoped they line out of their Prayer-Books a n passage for the common people about pride and vainglory. Forgive me, mother! Only a joke!"

ir Leicester and Lady Dedlock, my dear, are not fit subjects for joking."

ir Leicester is no joke by any means," says Watt; "and I humbly ask his n. I suppose, grandmother, that even with the family and their guests down there is no objection to my prolonging my stay at the Dedlock Arms for a two, as any other traveller might?"

urely, none in the world, child."

am glad of that," says Watt, "because I have an inexpressible desire to l my knowledge of this beautiful neighbourhood."

happens to glance at Rosa, who looks down, and is very shy, indeed. But, ling to the old superstition, it should be Rosa's ears that burn, and not her bright cheeks; for my Lady's maid is holding forth about her at this moment, surpassing energy.

Lady's maid is a Frenchwoman of two-and-thirty, from somewhere in the ern country about Avignon and Marseilles—a large-eyed brown woman with hair; who would be handsome, but for a certain feline mouth, and general afortable tightness of face, rendering the jaws too eager, and the skull too nent. There is something indefinably keen and wan about her anatomy; he has a watchful way of looking out of the corners of her eyes without turn- er head, which could be pleasantly dispensed with—especially when she is ill-humour and near knives. Through all the good taste of her dress and adornments, these objections so express themselves, that she seems to go like a very neat She-Wolf imperfectly tamed. Besides being accomplished the knowledge appertaining to her post, she is almost an Englishwoman in quaintance with the language—consequently, she is in no want of words to r upon Rosa for having attracted my Lady's attention; and she pours out with such grim ridicule as she sits at dinner, that her companion, the omate man, is rather relieved when she arrives at the spoon stage of that mance.

, ha, ha! She, Hortense, been in my Lady's service since five years, and s kept at the distance, and this doll, this puppet, caressed—absolutely ed—by my Lady on the moment of her arriving at the house! Ha, ha, ha d do you know how pretty you are, child?"—"No, my Lady."—You are there! "And how old are you, child! And take care they do not spoil y flattery, child!" O how droll! It is the *best* thing altogether.

short, it is such an admirable thing, that Mademoiselle Hortense can't forget at at meals for days afterwards, even among her countrywomen and others

attached in like capacity to the troop of visitors, relapses into silent enjoyment of the joke—an enjoyment expressed, in her own convivial manner, by an additional tightness of face, thin elongation of compressed lips, and sidewise look: which intense appreciation of humour is frequently reflected in my Lady's mirrors, when my Lady is not among them.

All the mirrors in the house are brought into action now: many of them after a long blank. They reflect handsome faces, simpering faces, youthful faces, faces of threescore-and-ten that will not submit to be old; the entire collection of faces that have come to pass a January week or two at Chesney Wold, and which the fashionable intelligence, a mighty hunter before the Lord, hunts with a keen scent, from their breaking cover at the Court of St. James's to their being run down to Death. The place in Lincolnshire is all alive. By day, guns and voices are heard ringing in the woods, horsemen and carriages enliven the park roads, servants and hangers-on pervade the Village and the Dedlock Arms. Seen by night, from distant openings in the trees, the row of windows in the long drawing-room, where my Lady's picture hangs over the great chimney-piece, is like a row of jewels set in a black frame. On Sunday, the chill little church is almost warmed by so much gallant company, and the general flavour of the Dedlock dust is quenched in delicate perfumes.

The brilliant and distinguished circle comprehends within it, no contracted amount of education, sense, courage, honour, beauty, and virtue. Yet there is something a little wrong about it, in despite of its immense advantages. What can it be?

Dandyism? There is no King George the Fourth now (more's the pity!) to set the dandy fashion: there are no clear-starched jack-towel neckcloths, no short-waisted coats, no false calves, no stays. There are no caricatures, now, of effeminate Exquisites so arrayed, swooning in opera boxes with excess of delight, and being revived by other dainty creatures, poking long-necked scent-bottles at their noses. There is no beau whom it takes four men at once to shake into his buckskins, or who goes to see all the executions, or who is troubled with the self-reproach of having once consumed a pea. But is there Dandyism in the brilliant and distinguished circle notwithstanding, Dandyism of a more mischievous sort, that has got below the surface and is doing less harmless things than jack-towelling itself and stopping its own digestion, to which no rational person need particularly object?

Why, yes. It cannot be disguised. There *are*, at Chesney Wold this January week, some ladies and gentlemen of the newest fashion, who have set up a Dandyism—in Religion, for instance. Who, in mere lack-latical want of an emotion, have agreed upon a little dandy talk about the Vulgar wanting faith in things in general; meaning, in the things that have been tried and found wanting, as though a low fellow should unaccountably lose faith in a bad shilling, after finding it out! Who would make the Vulgar very picturesque and faithful, by putting back the hands upon the Clock of Time, and cancelling a few hundred years of history.

There are also ladies and gentlemen of another fashion, not so new, but very elegant, who have agreed to put a smooth glaze on the world, and to keep down all its realities. For whom everything must be languid and pretty. Who have found out the perpetual stoppage. Who are to rejoice at nothing, and be sorry for nothing. Who are not to be disturbed by ideas. Or, when even the Fine Arts, attending in powder and walking backward like the Lord Chamberlain, must array themselves in the milliners' and tailors' patterns of past generations, and be particularly careful not to be in earnest, or to receive any impulses from the *moving age*.

le, which may be assumed to be the case in consequence of the breach
of that affair with Hoodle. Then, giving the Home Department and
ship of the House of Commons to Joodle, the Exchequer to Koodle,
s to Loodle, and the Foreign Office to Moodle, what are you to do with
You can't offer him the Presidency of the Council; that is reserved for
You can't put him in the Woods and Forests; that is hardly good
r Quoodle. What follows? That the country is shipwrecked, lost,
o pieces (as is made manifest to the patriotism of Sir Leicester Dedlock),
u can't provide for Noodle!
other hand, the Right Honourable William Buffy, M.P., contends across
with some one else, that the shipwreck of the country—about which
doubt; it is only the manner of it that is in question—is attributable to
you had done with Cuffy what you ought to have done when he first
Parliament, and had prevented him from going over to Duffy, you
e got him into alliance with Fuffy, you would have had with you the
aching as a smart debater to Guffy, you would have brought to bear
lections the wealth of Huffy, you would have got in for three counties
fy, and Luffy, and you would have strengthened your administration by
l knowledge and the business habits of Muffy. All this, instead of
ou now are, dependent on the mere caprice of Puffy!
is point, and as to some minor topics, there are differences of opinion;
erfectly clear to the brilliant and distinguished circle, all round, that
in question but Boodle and his retinue, and Buffy and *his* retinue.
the great actors for whom the stage is reserved. A People there are,
a certain large number of supernumeraries, who are to be occasionally
and relied upon for shouts and choruses, as on the theatrical stage; but
d Buffy, their followers and families, their heirs, executors, adminis-
d assigns, are the born first-actors, managers, and leaders, and no others
upon the scene for ever and ever.
too, there is perhaps more Dandyism at Chesney Wold than the brilliant
uished circle will find good for itself in the long run. For it is, even
illest and politest circles, as with the circle the necromancer draws
n—very strange appearances may be seen in active motion outside.
difference; that, being realities and not phantoms, there is the greater
their breaking in.

plaining flag-staff over his head; and has some leads outside, on which, any fine morning when he is down here, his black figure may be seen walking before breakfast like a larger species of rook.

Every day before dinner, my Lady looks for him in the dusk of the library, but he is not there. Every day at dinner, my Lady glances down the table for the vacant place, that would be waiting to receive him if he had just arrived; but there is no vacant place. Every night, my Lady casually asks her maid:

"Is Mr. Tulkinghorn come?"

Every night the answer is, "No, my Lady, not yet."

One night, while having her hair undressed, my Lady loses herself in deep thought after this reply, until she sees her own brooding face, in the opposite glass, and a pair of black eyes curiously observing her.

"Be so good as to attend," says my Lady then, addressing the reflection of Hortense, "to your business. You can contemplate your beauty at another time."

"Pardon! It was your Ladyship's beauty."

"That," says my Lady, "you needn't contemplate at all."

At length, one afternoon a little before sunset, when the bright groups of figures, which have for the last hour or two enlivened the Ghost's Walk, are all dispersed, and only Sir Leicester and my Lady remain upon the terrace, Mr. Tulkinghorn appears. He comes towards them at his usual methodical pace, which is never quickened, never slackened. He wears his usual expressionless mask—if it be a mask—and carries family secrets in every limb of his body, and every crease of his dress. Whether his whole soul is devoted to the great, or whether he yields them nothing beyond the services he sells, is his personal secret. He keeps it, as he keeps the secrets of his clients; he is his own client in that matter, and will never betray himself.

"How do you do, Mr. Tulkinghorn?" says Sir Leicester, giving him his hand.

Mr. Tulkinghorn is quite well. Sir Leicester is quite well. My Lady is quite well. All highly satisfactory. The lawyer, with his hands behind him, walks at Sir Leicester's side, along the terrace. My Lady walks upon the other side.

"We expected you before," says Sir Leicester. A gracious observation. As much as to say, "Mr. Tulkinghorn, we remember your existence when you are not here to remind us of it by your presence. We bestow a fragment of our minds upon you, sir, you see!"

Mr. Tulkinghorn, comprehending it, inclines his head, and says he is much obliged.

"I should have come down sooner," he explains, "but that I have been much engaged with those matters in the several suits between yourself and Boythorn."

"A man of a very ill-regulated mind," observes Sir Leicester, with severity. "An extremely dangerous person in any community. A man of a very low character of mind."

"He is obstinate," says Mr. Tulkinghorn.

"It is natural to such a man to be so," says Sir Leicester, looking most profoundly obstinate himself. "I am not at all surprised to hear it."

"The only question is," pursues the lawyer, "whether you will give up anything."

"No, sir," replies Sir Leicester. "Nothing. *I* give up?"

"I don't mean anything of importance. That, of course, I know you would not abandon. I mean any minor point."

"Mr. Tulkinghorn," returns Sir Leicester, "there can be no minor point between myself and Mr. Boythorn. If I go farther, and observe that I cannot readily

how *any* right of mine can be a minor point, I speak not so much in
to myself as an individual, as in reference to the family position I have
rge to maintain."
ulkinghorn inclines his head again. "I have now my instructions," he
Mr. Boythorn will give us a good deal of trouble—"
the character of such a mind, Mr. Tulkinghorn," Sir Leicester interrupts
o give trouble. An exceedingly ill-conditioned, levelling person. A
ho, fifty years ago, would probably have been tried at the Old Bailey for
magogue proceeding, and severely punished—if not," adds Sir Leicester,
oment's pause, "if not hanged, drawn, and quartered."
icester appears to discharge his stately breast of a burden, in passing this
entence; as if it were the next satisfactory thing to having the sentence
.
night is coming on," says he, "and my Lady will take cold. My dear,
in."
ey turn towards the hall-door, Lady Dedlock addresses Mr. Tulkinghorn
rst time.
sent me a message respecting the person whose writing I happened to
about. It was like you to remember the circumstance; I had quite for-
. Your message reminded me of it again. I can't imagine what association
ith a hand like that; but I surely had some."
had some?" Mr. Tulkinghorn repeats.
es!" returns my Lady, carelessly. "I think I must have had some. And
really take the trouble to find out the writer of that actual thing—what is
davit?"
."
very cold!"
pass into a sombre breakfast-room on the ground floor, lighted in the day
deep windows. It is now twilight. The fire glows brightly on the
wall, and palely on the window-glass, where, through the cold reflection
laze, the colder landscape shudders in the wind, and a grey mist creeps
he only traveller besides the waste of clouds.
dy lounges in a great chair in the chimney-corner, and Sir Leicester takes
great chair opposite. The lawyer stands before the fire, with his hand
n's length, shading his face. He looks across his arm at my Lady.
" he says, "I inquired about the man, and found him. And, what is
nge, I found him—"
to be any out-of-the-way person, I am afraid!" Lady Dedlock languidly
es.
nd him dead."
ear me!" remonstrated Sir Leicester. Not so much shocked by the fact,
e fact of the fact being mentioned.
as directed to his lodging—a miserable, poverty-stricken place—and I
m dead."
will excuse me, Mr. Tulkinghorn," observes Sir Leicester. "I think
aid—"
, Sir Leicester, let me hear the story out" (it is my Lady speaking). "It
story for twilight. How very shocking! Dead?"
ulkinghorn re-asserts it by another inclination of his head. "Whether
n hand—"
n my honour!" cries Sir Leicester. "Really!"
et me hear the story!" says my Lady.
atever you desire, *my dear*. *But*, I must say—"

"No, you mustn't say! Go on, Mr. Tulkinghorn."

Sir Leicester's gallantry concedes the point; though he still feels that to bring this sort of squalor among the upper classes is really—really—

"I was about to say," resumes the lawyer, with undisturbed calmness, "that whether he had died by his own hand or not, it was beyond my power to tell you. I should amend that phrase, however, by saying that he had unquestionably died of his own act; though whether by his own deliberate intention, or by mischance, can never certainly be known. The Coroner's jury found that he took the poison accidentally."

"And what kind of man," my Lady asks, "was this deplorable creature?"

"Very difficult to say," returns the lawyer, shaking his head. "He had lived a wretchedly, and was so neglected, with his gipsy colour, and his wild black hair and beard, that I should have considered him the commonest of the common. The surgeon had a notion that he had once been something better, both in appearance and condition."

"What did they call the wretched being?"

"They called him what he had called himself, but no one knew his name."

"Not even any one who had attended on him?"

"No one had attended on him. He was found dead. In fact, I found him."

"Without any clue to anything more?"

"Without any; there was," says the lawyer meditatively, "an old portmanteau; but—No, there were no papers."

During the utterance of every word of this short dialogue, Lady Dedlock and Mr. Tulkinghorn, without any other alteration in their customary deportment, have looked very steadily at one another—as was natural, perhaps, in the discussion of so unusual a subject. Sir Leicester has looked at the fire, with the general expression of the Dedlock on the staircase. The story being told, he renews his stately protest, saying, that as it is quite clear that no association in my Lady's mind can possibly be traceable to this poor wretch (unless he was a begging-letter writer); he trusts to hear no more about a subject so far removed from my Lady's station.

"Certainly, a collection of horrors," says my Lady, gathering up her mantles and furs; "but they interest one for the moment! Have the kindness, Mr. Tulkinghorn, to open the door for me."

Mr. Tulkinghorn does so with deference, and holds it open while she passes out. She passes close to him, with her usual fatigued manner, and insolent grace. They meet again at dinner—again, next day—again, for many days in succession. Lady Dedlock is always the same exhausted deity, surrounded by worshippers, and terribly liable to be bored to death, even while presiding at her own shrine. Mr. Tulkinghorn is always the same speechless repository of noble confidences: so oddly out of place, and yet so perfectly at home. They appear to take as little note of one another, as any two people, enclosed within the same walls, could. But, whether each evermore watches and suspects the other, evermore mistrustful of some great reservation; whether each is evermore prepared at all points for the other, and never to be taken unawares; what each would give to know how much the other knows—all this is hidden, for the time, in their own hearts.

CHAPTER XIII.

ESTHER'S NARRATIVE.

d many consultations about what Richard was to be; first, without Mr.
:, as he had requested, and afterwards with him; but it was a long time
'e seemed to make progress. Richard said he was ready for anything.
Ir. Jarndyce doubted whether he might not already be too old to enter the
Richard said he had thought of that, and perhaps he was. When Mr.
: asked him what he thought of the Army. Richard said he had thought
too, and it wasn't a bad idea. When Mr. Jarndyce advised him to try
de within himself, whether his old preference for the sea was an ordinary
nclination, or a strong impulse, Richard answered, Well he really *had*
y often, and he couldn't make out.
r much of this indecision of character," Mr. Jarndyce said to me, "is
ole on that incomprehensible heap of uncertainty and procrastination on
e has been thrown from his birth, I don't pretend to say; but that Chan-
ong its other sins, is responsible for some of it, I can plainly see. It has
red or confirmed in him a habit of putting off—and trusting to this, that,
other chance, without knowing what chance—and dismissing everything
tled, uncertain, and confused. The character of much older and steadier
nay be even changed by the circumstances surrounding them. It would
nuch to expect that a boy's, in its formation, should be the subject of such
:s, and escape them."
his to be true; though, if I may venture to mention what I thought besides,
it it much to be regretted that Richard's education had not counteracted
luences, or directed his character. He had been eight years at a public
nd had learnt, I understood, to make Latin Verses of several sorts, in the
nirable manner. But I never heard that it had been anybody's business
ut what his natural bent was, or where his failings lay, or to adapt any
nowledge to *him*. *He* had been adapted to the Verses, and had learnt
f making them to such perfection, that if he had remained at school until
f age, I suppose he could only have gone on making them over and over
nless he had enlarged his education by forgetting how to do it. Still,
I had no doubt that they were very beautiful, and very improving, and
icient for a great many purposes of life, and always remembered all through
d doubt whether Richard would not have profited by some one studying
tle, instead of his studying them quite so much.
sure, I knew nothing of the subject, and do not even now know whether
g gentlemen of classic Rome or Greece made verses to the same extent—
er the young gentlemen of any country ever did.
ven't the least idea," said Richard, musing, "what I had better be.
hat I am quite sure I don't want to go into the Church, it's a toss-up."
have no inclination in Mr. Kenge's way?" suggested Mr. Jarndyce.
n't know that, sir!" replied Richard. "I am fond of boating. Articled
a good deal on the water. It's a capital profession!"
geon—" suggested Mr. Jarndyce.
t's the thing, sir!" cried Richard.
t if he had ever once thought of it before.
t's the thing, sir;" repeated Richard, with the greatest enthusiasm.
ve got it at last. M.R.C.S.!"
is not to be laughed *out of it, though* he laughed at it heartily. He said

he had chosen his profession, and the more he thought of it, the more he his destiny was clear; the art of healing was the art of all others for him trusting that he only came to this conclusion, because, having never ha chance of finding out for himself what he was fitted for, and having ne guided to the discovery, he was taken by the newest idea, and was glad t of the trouble of consideration, I wondered whether the Latin Verses oft in this, or whether Richard's was a solitary case.

Mr. Jarndyce took great pains to talk with him, seriously, and to put good sense not to deceive himself in so important a matter. Richard wa grave after these interviews; but invariably told Ada and me "that it right," and then began to talk about something else.

"By Heaven!" cried Mr. Boythorn, who interested himself strongl subject—though I need not say that, for he could do nothing weakly; " to find a young gentleman of spirit and gallantry devoting himself to th profession! The more spirit there is in it, the better for mankind, and t for those mercenary task-masters and low tricksters who delight in putt illustrious art at a disadvantage in the world. By all that is base and desp cried Mr. Boythorn, "the treatment of Surgeons aboard ship is such, that submit the legs—both legs—of every member of the Admiralty Board t pound fracture, and render it a transportable offence in any qualified pra to set them, if the system were not wholly changed in eight-and-forty hou

"Wouldn't you give them a week?" asked Mr. Jarndyce.

"No!" cried Mr. Boythorn, firmly. "Not on any consideration! Ei forty hours! As to Corporations, Parishes, Vestry-Boards, and similar ga of jolter-headed clods, who assemble to exchange such speeches that, by I they ought to be worked in quicksilver mines for the short remainder miserable existence, if it were only to prevent their detestable English fr taminating a language spoken in the presence of the Sun—as to those who meanly take advantage of the ardour of gentlemen in the pursuit of kno to recompense the inestimable services of the best years of their lives, th study, and their expensive education, with pittances too small for the ac of clerks, I would have the necks of every one of them wrung, and the arranged in Surgeons' Hall for the contemplation of the whole profession— that its younger members might understand from actual measurement, in c *how* thick skulls may become!"

He wound up this vehement declaration by looking round upon us witl agreeable smile, and suddenly thundering, Ha, ha, ha! over and over aga anybody else might have been expected to be quite subdued by the exertio

As Richard still continued to say that he was fixed in his choice, after r periods for consideration had been recommended by Mr. Jarndyce, and had e and he still continued to assure Ada and me, in the same final manner, th "all right;" it became advisable to take Mr. Kenge into council. Mr. therefore, came down to dinner one day, and leaned back in his chair, anc his eye-glasses over and over, and spoke in a sonorous voice, and did exact I remembered to have seen him do when I was a little girl.

"Ah!" said Mr. Kenge. "Yes. Well! A very good profession, M dyce; a very good profession."

"The course of study and preparation requires to be diligently pu observed my Guardian, with a glance at Richard.

"O, no doubt," said Mr. Kenge. "Diligently."

"But that being the case, more or less, with all pursuits, that are worth said Mr. Jarndyce, "it is not a special consideration which another choic *be likely to escape.*"

"Truly," said Mr. Kenge. "And Mr. Richard Carstone, who has so meritoriously acquitted himself in the—shall I say the classic shades?—in which his youth had been passed, will, no doubt, apply the habits, if not the principles and practice, of versification in that tongue in which a poet was said (unless I mistake) to be born, not made, to the more eminently practical field of action on which he enters."

"You may rely upon it," said Richard, in his off-hand manner, "that I shall go at it and do my best."

"Very well, Mr. Jarndyce!" said Mr. Kenge, gently nodding his head. "Really, when we are assured by Mr. Richard that he means to go at it, and to do his best," nodding feelingly and smoothly over those expressions; "I would submit to you, that we have only to inquire into the best mode of carrying out the object of his ambition. Now, with reference to placing Mr. Richard with some sufficiently eminent practitioner. Is there any one in view at present?"

"No one, Rick, I think?" said my Guardian.

"No one, sir," said Richard.

"Quite so!" observed Mr. Kenge. "As to situation, now. Is there any particular feeling on that head?"

"N—no," said Richard.

"Quite so!" observed Mr. Kenge again.

"I should like a little variety," said Richard; "—I mean a good range of experience."

"Very requisite, no doubt," returned Mr. Kenge. "I think this may be easily arranged, Mr. Jarndyce? We have only, in the first place, to discover a sufficiently eligible practitioner; and, as soon as we make our want—and, shall I add, our ability to pay a premium?—known, our only difficulty will be in the selection of one from a large number. We have only, in the second place, to observe those little formalities which are rendered necessary by our time of life, and our being under the guardianship of the Court. We shall soon be—shall I say, in Mr. Richard's own light-hearted manner, 'going at it'—to our heart's content. It is a coincidence," said Mr. Kenge, with a tinge of melancholy in his smile, "one of those coincidences which may or may not require an explanation beyond our present limited faculties, that I have a cousin in the medical profession. He might be deemed eligible by you, and might be disposed to respond to this proposal. I can answer for him as little as for you; but he *might!*"

As this was an opening in the prospect, it was arranged that Mr. Kenge should see his cousin. And as Mr. Jarndyce had before proposed to take us to London for a few weeks, it was settled next day that we should make our visit at once, and combine Richard's business with it.

Mr. Boythorn leaving us within a week, we took up our abode at a cheerful lodging near Oxford Street, over an upholsterer's shop. London was a great wonder to us, and we were out for hours and hours at a time; seeing the sights; which appeared to be less capable of exhaustion than we were. We made the round of the principal theatres, too, with great delight, and saw all the plays that were worth seeing. I mention this, because it was at the theatre that I began to be made uncomfortable again, by Mr. Guppy.

I was sitting in front of the box one night with Ada; and Richard was in the place he liked best, behind Ada's chair; when, happening to look down into the pit, I saw Mr. Guppy, with his hair flattened down upon his head, and woe depicted in his face, looking up at me. I felt, all through the performance, that he never looked at the actors, but constantly looked at me, and always with a carefully prepared expression of the deepest misery and the profoundest dejection.

It quite spoiled my pleasure for that night, because it was so very embarrassing, and so very ridiculous. *But, from that time forth,* we never went to the play

without my seeing Mr. Guppy in the pit, always with his hair straight a his shirt-collar turned down, and a general feebleness about him. If he w there when we went in, and I began to hope he would not come, and myself for a little while to the interest of the scene, I was certain to encou languishing eyes when I least expected it, and, from that time, to be qu that they were fixed upon me all the evening.

I really cannot express how uneasy this made me. If he would on brushed up his hair, or turned up his collar, it would have been bad enou to know that that absurd figure was always gazing at me, and always demonstrative state of despondency, put such a constraint upon me that I like to laugh at the play, or to cry at it, or to move or to speak. I seem to do nothing naturally. As to escaping Mr. Guppy by going to the back box, I could not bear to do that; because I knew Richard and Ada m having me next them, and that they could never have talked together so if anybody else had been in my place. So there I sat, not knowing w look—for wherever I looked, I knew Mr. Guppy's eyes were following a thinking of the dreadful expense to which this young man was putting hi my account.

Sometimes I thought of telling Mr. Jarndyce. Then I feared that th man would lose his situation, and that I might ruin him. Sometimes, I of confiding in Richard; but was deterred by the possibility of his fight Guppy, and giving him black eyes. Sometimes, I thought, should I f him, or shake my head. Then I felt I could not do it. Sometimes, I co whether I should write to his mother, but that ended in my being convin to open a correspondence would be to make the matter worse. I always the conclusion, finally, that I could do nothing. Mr. Guppy's persever this time, not only produced him regularly at any theatre to which we w caused him to appear in the crowd as we were coming out, and even t behind our fly—where I am sure I saw him, two or three times, stu among the most dreadful spikes. After we got home, he haunted a post o our house. The upholsterer's where we lodged, being at the corner streets, and my bedroom window being opposite the post, I was afraid to the window when I went up-stairs, lest I should see him (as I did one m night) leaning against the post, and evidently catching cold. If Mr. Gu not been, fortunately for me, engaged in the day-time, I really should have rest from him.

While we were making this round of gaieties, in which Mr. Guppy so dinarily participated, the business which had helped to bring us to town neglected. Mr. Kenge's cousin was a Mr. Bayham Badger, who had practice at Chelsea, and attended a large public Institution besides. quite willing to receive Richard into his house, and to superintend his and as it seemed that those could be pursued advantageously under Mr. B roof, and Mr. Badger liked Richard, and as Richard said he liked Mr. "well enough," an agreement was made, the Lord Chancellor's consc obtained, and it was all settled.

On the day when matters were concluded between Richard and Mr. we were all under engagement to dine at Mr. Badger's house. We we "merely a family party," Mrs. Badger's note said; and we found no la but Mrs. Badger herself. She was surrounded in the drawing-room by objects, indicative of her painting a little, playing the piano a little, play guitar a little, playing the harp a little, singing a little, working a little, re little, writing poetry a little, and botanising a little. She was a lady o fifty, I should think, youthfully dressed, and of a very fine complexion. I

to the little list of her accomplishments, that she rouged a little, I do not mean that there was any harm in it.

Mr. Bayham Badger himself was a pink, fresh-faced, crisp-looking gentleman, with a weak voice, white teeth, light hair, and surprised eyes: some years younger, I should say, than Mrs. Bayham Badger. He admired her exceedingly, but principally, and to begin with, on the curious ground (as it seemed to us) of her having had three husbands. We had barely taken our seats, when he said to Mr. Jarndyce quite triumphantly,

"You would hardly suppose that I am Mrs. Bayham Badger's third!"

"Indeed?" said Mr. Jarndyce.

"Her third!" said Mr. Badger. "Mrs. Bayham Badger has not the appearance, Miss Summerson, of a lady who has had two former husbands?"

I said "Not at all!"

"And most remarkable men!" said Mr. Badger, in a tone of confidence. "Captain Swosser of the Royal Navy, who was Mrs. Badger's first husband, was a very distinguished officer indeed. The name of Professor Dingo, my immediate predecessor, is one of European reputation."

Mrs. Badger overheard him, and smiled.

"Yes, my dear!" Mr. Badger replied to the smile, "I was observing to Mr. Jarndyce and Miss Summerson, that you had had two former husbands—both very distinguished men. And they found it, as people generally do, difficult to believe."

I was barely twenty," said Mrs. Badger, "when I married Captain Swosser of the Royal Navy. I was in the Mediterranean with him; I am quite a Sailor. On the twelfth anniversary of my wedding-day, I became the wife of Professor Dingo."

("Of European reputation," added Mr. Badger in an under-tone.)

"And when Mr. Badger and myself were married," pursued Mrs. Badger, "we were married on the same day of the year. I had become attached to the day."

"So that Mrs. Badger has been married to three husbands—two of them highly distinguished men," said Mr. Badger, summing up the facts; "and, each time, upon the twenty-first of March at Eleven in the forenoon!"

We all expressed our admiration.

"But for Mr. Badger's modesty," said Mr. Jarndyce, "I would take leave to correct him, and say three distinguished men."

"Thank you, Mr. Jarndyce! What I always tell him!" observed Mrs. Badger.

"And, my dear," said Mr. Badger, "what do *I* always tell you? That without my affectation of disparaging such professional distinction as I may have attained (which our friend Mr. Carstone will have many opportunities of estimating), I am not so weak—no, really," said Mr. Badger to us generally, "so unreasonable—as to put my reputation on the same footing with such first-rate men as Captain Swosser and Professor Dingo. Perhaps you may be interested, Mr. Jarndyce," continued Mr. Bayham Badger, leading the way into the next drawing-room, "in this portrait of Captain Swosser. It was taken on his return home from the African Station, where he had suffered from the fever of the country. Mrs. Badger considers it too yellow. But it's a very fine head. A very fine head!"

We all echoed "A very fine head!"

"I feel when I look at it," said Mr. Badger, "'that's a man I should like to have seen!' It strikingly bespeaks the first-class man that Captain Swosser pre-eminently was. On the other side, Professor Dingo. I knew him well—attended him in his last illness—a speaking likeness! Over the piano, Mrs. Bayham Badger when Mrs. Swosser. Over the sofa, Mrs. Bayham Badger when Mrs. Dingo. Of Mrs. Bayham Badger *in esse*, I possess the original, and have no copy."

Dinner was now announced, and we went down-stairs. It was a ver entertainment, very handsomely served. But the Captain and the Prof ran in Mr. Badger's head, and, as Ada and I had the honour of being particular care, we had the full benefit of them.

"Water, Miss Summerson? Allow me! Not in that tumbler, pray me the Professor's goblet, James!"

Ada very much admired some artificial flowers, under a glass.

"Astonishing how they keep!" said Mr. Badger. "They were pre Mrs. Bayham Badger when she was in the Mediterranean."

He invited Mr. Jarndyce to take a glass of claret.

"Not that claret!" he said. "Excuse me! This is an occasion, a occasion I produce some very special claret I happen to have. (James Swosser's wine!) Mr. Jarndyce, this is a wine that was imported by the we will not say how many years ago. You will find it very curious. M shall be happy to take some of this wine with you. (Captain Swosser's your mistress, James!) My love, your health!"

After dinner, when we ladies retired, we took Mrs. Badger's first an husband with us. Mrs. Badger gave us, in the drawing-room, a Bio sketch of the life and services of Captain Swosser before his marriage, an minute account of him dating from the time when he fell in love with ball on board the Crippler, given to the officers of that ship when sl Plymouth Harbour.

"The dear old Crippler!" said Mrs. Badger, shaking her head. "S noble vessel. Trim, ship-shape, all a taunto, as Captain Swosser used You must excuse me if I occasionally introduce a nautical expression; I a sailor once. Captain Swosser loved that craft for my sake. When sh longer in commission, he frequently said that if he were rich enough t old hulk, he would have an inscription let into the timbers of the qua where we stood as partners in the dance, to mark the spot where he fe fore and aft (Captain Swosser used to say) by the fire from my tops. I naval way of mentioning my eyes."

Mrs. Badger shook her head, sighed, and looked in the glass.

"It was a great change from Captain Swosser to Professor Dingo, sumed, with a plaintive smile. "I felt it a good deal at first. Such revolution in my mode of life! But custom, combined with science—pa science—inured me to it. Being the Professor's sole companion in his excursions, I almost forgot that I had ever been afloat, and became quite It is singular that the Professor was the Antipodes of Captain Swosser, Mr. Badger is not in the least like either!"

We then passed into a narrative of the deaths of Captain Swosser and Dingo, both of whom seem to have had very bad complaints. In the co Mrs. Badger signified to us that she had never madly loved but once; the object of that wild affection, never to be recalled in its fresh enthusi Captain Swosser. The Professor was yet dying by inches in the mo manner, and Mrs. Badger was giving us imitations of his way of say great difficulty, "Where is Laura? Let Laura give me my toast and when the entrance of the gentlemen consigned him to the tomb.

Now, I observed that evening, as I had observed for some days Ada and Richard were more than ever attached to each other's society was but natural, seeing that they were going to be separated so soon therefore not very much surprised, when we got home, and Ada and up-stairs, to find Ada more silent than usual; though I was not quite pre her coming into my arms, and beginning to speak to me, with her face hi

y darling Esther!" murmured Ada. "I have a great secret to tell you!"
ighty secret, my pretty one, no doubt!
hat is it, Ada?"
Esther, you would never guess!"
all I try to guess?" said I.
no! Don't! Pray don't!" cried Ada, very much startled by the idea of
ing so.
ow, I wonder who it can be about?" said I, pretending to consider.
's about," said Ada, in a whisper. "It's about—my cousin Richard!"
Well, my own!" said I, kissing her bright hair, which was all I could see.
what about him?"
Esther, you would never guess!"
as so pretty to have her clinging to me in that way, hiding her face; and
w that she was not crying in sorrow, but in a little glow of joy, and pride,
pe; that I would not help her just yet.
e says—I know it's very foolish, we are both so young—but he says," with
of tears, "that he loves me dearly, Esther."
oes he indeed?" said I. "I never heard of such a thing! Why, my pet
, I could have told you that weeks and weeks ago!"
ee Ada lift up her flushed face in joyful surprise, and hold me round the
nd laugh, and cry, and blush, and laugh, was so pleasant!
hy, my darling!" said I, "what a goose you must take me for! Your
Richard has been loving you as plainly as he could, for I don't know how

nd yet you never said a word about it!" cried Ada, kissing me.
o, my love," said I. "I waited to be told."
t now I have told you, you don't think it wrong of me; do you?" returned
She might have coaxed me to say No, if I had been the hardest-hearted
a in the world. Not being that yet, I said No, very freely.
d now," said I, "I know the worst of it."
that's not quite the worst of it, Esther dear!" cried Ada, holding me
, and laying down her face again upon my breast.
?" said I. "Not even that?"
, not even that!" said Ada, shaking her head.
hy, you never mean to say—!" I was beginning in joke.
Ada, looking up, and smiling through her tears, cried, "Yes, I do! You
you know I do!" and then sobbed out, "With all my heart I do! With
whole heart, Esther!"
d her, laughing, why I had known that, too, just as well as I had known
er! And we sat before the fire, and I had all the talking to myself for
while (though there was not much of it); and Ada was soon quiet and

you think my cousin John knows, dear Dame Durden?" she asked.
less my cousin John is blind, my pet," said I, "I should think my cousin
nows pretty well as much as we know."
e want to speak to him before Richard goes," said Ada, timidly, "and we
you to advise us, and to tell him so. Perhaps you wouldn't mind
d's coming in, Dame Durden?"
Richard is outside, is he, my dear?" said I.
m not quite certain," returned Ada, with a bashful simplicity that would
on my heart, if she had not won it long before; "but I think he's waiting
door."
e he was, of *course*. *They* brought a chair on either side of me, and put

me between them, and really seemed to have fallen in love with me, instead of one another; they were so confiding, and so trustful, and so fond of me. They went on in their own wild way for a little while—*I* never stopped them; I enjoyed it too much myself—and then we gradually fell to considering how young they were, and how there must be a lapse of several years before this early love could come to anything, and how it could come to happiness only if it were real and lasting, and inspired them with a steady resolution to do their duty to each other, with constancy, fortitude, and perseverance: each always for the other's sake. Well! Richard said that he would work his fingers to the bone for Ada, and Ada said that she would work her fingers to the bone for Richard, and they called me all sorts of endearing and sensible names, and we sat there, advising and talking, half the night. Finally, before we parted, I gave them my promise to speak to their cousin John to-morrow.

So, when to-morrow came, I went to my Guardian after breakfast, in the room that was our town-substitute for the Growlery, and told him that I had it in trust to tell him something.

"Well, little woman," said he, shutting up his book, "if you have accepted the trust, there can be no harm in it."

"I hope not, Guardian," said I. "I can guarantee that there is no secrecy in it. For it only happened yesterday."

"Aye? And what is it, Esther?"

"Guardian," said I, "you remember the happy night when first we came down to Bleak House? When Ada was singing in the dark room?"

I wished to call to his remembrance the look he had given me then. Unless I am much mistaken, I saw that I did so.

"Because," said I, with a little hesitation.

"Yes, my dear!" said he. "Don't hurry."

"Because," said I, "Ada and Richard have fallen in love. And have told each other so."

"Already!" cried my Guardian, quite astonished.

"Yes!" said I, "and to tell you the truth, Guardian, I rather expected it."

"The deuce you did!" said he.

He sat considering for a minute or two; with his smile, at once so handsome and so kind, upon his changing face; and then requested me to let them know that he wished to see them. When they came, he encircled Ada with one arm, in his fatherly way, and addressed himself to Richard with a cheerful gravity.

"Rick," said Mr. Jarndyce, "I am glad to have won your confidence. I hope to preserve it. When I contemplated these relations between us four which have so brightened my life, and so invested it with new interests and pleasures, I certainly did contemplate, afar off, the possibility of you and your pretty cousin here (don't be shy, Ada, don't be shy, my dear!) being in a mind to go through life together. I saw, and do see, many reasons to make it desirable. But that was afar off, Rick, afar off!"

"We look afar off, sir," returned Richard.

"Well!" said Mr. Jarndyce. "That's rational. Now, hear me, my dears! I might tell you that you don't know your own minds yet; that a thousand things may happen to divert you from one another; that it is well this chain of flowers you have taken up is very easily broken, or it might become a chain of lead. But I will not do that. Such wisdom will come soon enough, I dare say, if it is to come at all. I will assume that, a few years hence, you will be in your hearts to one another, what you are to-day. All I say before speaking to you according to that assumption is, if you *do* change—if you *do* come to find that you are more *commonplace cousins* to each other as man and woman, than you were as boy

was packing his books, "was not very visible when you called it by that name: but it does approve, and she thinks you can't do better."

So, Richard said there was an end of it,—and immediately began, on no other foundation, to build as many castles in the air as would man the great wall of China. He went away in high spirits. Ada and I, prepared to miss him very much, commenced our quieter career.

On our arrival in London, we had called with Mr. Jarndyce at Mrs. Jellyby's, but had not been so fortunate as to find her at home. It appeared that she had gone somewhere, to a tea-drinking, and had taken Miss Jellyby with her. Besides the tea-drinking, there was to be some considerable speech-making and letter-writing on the general merits of the cultivation of coffee, conjointly with natives, at the Settlement of Borrioboola Gha. All this involved, no doubt, sufficient active exercise of pen and ink, to make her daughter's part in the proceedings, anything but a holiday.

It being, now, beyond the time appointed for Mrs. Jellyby's return, we called again. She was in town, but not at home, having gone to Mile End, directly after breakfast, on some Borrioboolan business, arising out of a Society called the East London Branch Aid Ramification. As I had not seen Peepy on the occasion of our last call (when he was not to be found anywhere, and when the cook rather thought he must have strolled away with the dustman's cart), I now inquired for him again. The oyster shells he had been building a house with, were still in the passage, but he was nowhere discoverable, and the cook supposed that he had "gone after the sheep." When we repeated, with some surprise, "The sheep?" she said, O yes, on market days he sometimes followed them quite out of town, and came back in such a state as never was!

I was sitting at the window with my guardian, on the following morning, and Ada was busy writing—of course to Richard—when Miss Jellyby was announced, and entered, leading the identical Peepy, whom she had made some endeavours to render presentable, by wiping the dirt into corners of his face and hands, and making his hair very wet and then violently frizzling it with her fingers. Everything the dear child wore, was either too large for him or too small. Among his other contradictory decorations he had the hat of a Bishop, and the little gloves of a baby. His boots were, on a small scale, the boots of a ploughman: while his legs, so crossed and recrossed with scratches that they looked like maps, were bare, below a very short pair of plaid drawers finished off with two frills of perfectly different patterns. The deficient buttons on his plaid frock had evidently been supplied from one of Mr. Jellyby's coats, they were so extremely brazen and so much too large. Most extraordinary specimens of needlework appeared on several parts of his dress, where it had been hastily mended; and I recognised the same hand on Miss Jellyby's. She was, however, unaccountably improved in her appearance, and looked very pretty. She was conscious of poor little Peepy being but a failure after all her trouble, and she showed it as she came in, by the way in which she glanced, first at him and then at us.

"O dear me!" said my guardian, "Due East!"

Ada and I gave her a cordial welcome, and presented her to Mr. Jarndyce; to whom she said, as she sat down:

"Ma's compliments, and she hopes you'll excuse her, because she's correcting proofs of the plan. She's going to put out five thousand new circulars, and she knows you'll be interested to hear that. I have brought one of them with me. Ma's compliments." With which she presented it sulkily enough.

"Thank you," said my guardian. "I am much obliged to Mrs. Jellyby. O dear me! This is a very trying wind!"

We were busy with Peepy; *taking off his* clerical hat; asking him if he remem-

bered us; and so on. Peepy retired behind his elbow at first, but relented at the sight of sponge-cake, and allowed me to take him on my lap, where he sat munching quietly. Mr. Jarndyce then withdrawing into the temporary Growlery, Miss Jellyby opened a conversation with her usual abruptness.

"We are going on just as bad as ever in Thavies Inn," said she. "I have no peace of my life. Talk of Africa! I couldn't be worse off if I was a what's-his-name—man and a brother!"

I tried to say something soothing.

"O, it's of no use, Miss Summerson," exclaimed Miss Jellyby, "though I thank you for the kind intention all the same. I know how I am used, and I am not to be talked over. *You* wouldn't be talked over, if you were used so. Peepy, go and play at Wild Beasts under the piano!"

"I sha'n't!" said Peepy.

"Very well, you ungrateful, naughty, hard-hearted boy!" returned Miss Jellyby, with tears in her eyes. "I'll never take pains to dress you any more."

"Yes, I will go, Caddy!" cried Peepy, who was really a good child, and who was so moved by his sister's vexation that he went at once.

"It seems a little thing to cry about," said poor Miss Jellyby, apologetically, "but I am quite worn out. I was directing the new circulars till two this morning. I detest the whole thing so, that that alone makes my head ache till I can't see out of my eyes. And look at that poor unfortunate child! Was there ever such a fright as he is!"

Peepy, happily unconscious of the defects in his appearance, sat on the carpet behind one of the legs of the piano, looking calmly out of his den at us, while he ate his cake.

"I have sent him to the other end of the room," observed Miss Jellyby, drawing her chair nearer ours, "because I don't want him to hear the conversation. Those little things are so sharp! I was going to say, we really are going on worse than ever. Pa will be a bankrupt before long, and then I hope Ma will be satisfied. There'll be nobody but Ma to thank for it."

We said we hoped Mr. Jellyby's affairs were not in so bad a state as that.

"It's of no use hoping, though it's very kind of you," returned Miss Jellyby, shaking her head. "Pa told me, only yesterday morning (and dreadfully unhappy he is), that he couldn't weather the storm. I should be surprised if he could. When all our tradesmen send into our house any stuff they like, and the servants do what they like with it, and I have no time to improve things if I knew how, and Ma don't care about anything, I should like to make out how Pa *is* to weather the storm. I declare if I was Pa, I'd run away."

"My dear!" said I, smiling. "Your papa, no doubt, considers his family."

"O yes, his family is all very fine, Miss Summerson," replied Miss Jellyby; "but what comfort is his family to him? His family is nothing but bills, dirt, waste, noise, tumbles down stairs, confusion, and wretchedness. His scrambling home, from week's-end to week's-end, is like one great washing-day—only nothing's washed!"

Miss Jellyby tapped her foot upon the floor, and wiped her eyes.

"I am sure I pity Pa to that degree," she said, "and am so angry with Ma, that I can't find words to express myself! However, I am not going to bear it, I am determined. I won't be a slave all my life, and I won't submit to be proposed to by Mr. Quale. A pretty thing, indeed, to marry a Philanthropist. As if I hadn't had enough of *that!*" said poor Miss Jellyby.

I must confess that I could not help feeling rather angry with Mrs. Jellyby, myself; seeing and hearing this neglected girl, and knowing how much of bitterly *satirical truth* there was in what she said.

"If it wasn't that we had been intimate when you stopped at our house," pursued Miss Jellyby, "I should have been ashamed to come here to-day, for I know what a figure I must seem to you two. But, as it is, I made up my mind to call: especially as I am not likely to see you again, the next time you come to town."

She said this with such great significance that Ada and I glanced at one another, presseeing something more.

"No!" said Miss Jellyby, shaking her head. "Not at all likely! I know I may trust you two. I am sure you won't betray me. I am engaged."

"Without their knowledge at home?" said I.

"Why, good gracious me, Miss Summerson," she returned, justifying herself in a fretful but not angry manner, "how can it be otherwise? You know what Pa is—and I needn't make poor Pa more miserable by telling *him*."

"But would it not be adding to his unhappiness, to marry without his knowledge or consent, my dear?" said I.

"No," said Miss Jellyby, softening. "I hope not. I should try to make him happy and comfortable when he came to see me; and Peepy and the others should take it in turns to come and stay with me; and they should have some care taken of them, then."

There was a good deal of affection in poor Caddy. She softened more and more while saying this, and cried so much over the unwonted little home-picture she had raised in her mind, that Peepy, in his cave under the piano, was touched, and turned himself over on his back with loud lamentations. It was not until I had brought him to kiss his sister, and had restored him to his place on my lap, and had shown him that Caddy was laughing (she laughed expressly for the purpose), that we could recall his peace of mind; even then, it was for some time conditional on his taking us in turns by the chin, and smoothing our faces all over with his hand. At last, as his spirits were not equal to the piano, we put him on a chair to look out of window; and Miss Jellyby, holding him by one leg, resumed her confidence.

"It began in your coming to our house," she said.

We naturally asked how?

"I felt I was so awkward," she replied, "that I made up my mind to be improved in that respect, at all events, and to learn to dance. I told Ma I was ashamed of myself, and I must be taught to dance. Ma looked at me in that provoking way of hers as if I wasn't in sight; but, I was quite determined to be taught to dance, and so I went to Mr. Turveydrop's Academy in Newman Street."

"And was it there, my dear ——" I began.

"Yes, it was there," said Caddy, "and I am engaged to Mr. Turveydrop. There are two Mr. Turveydrops, father and son. My Mr. Turveydrop is the son. Of course. I only wish I had been better brought up, and was likely to make him a better wife; for I am very fond of him."

"I am sorry to hear this," said I, "I must confess."

"I don't know why you should be sorry," she retorted a little anxiously, "but I am engaged to Mr. Turveydrop, whether or no, and he is very fond of me. It's a secret as yet, even on his side, because old Mr. Turveydrop has a share in the connexion, and it might break his heart, or give him some other shock, if he was told of it abruptly. Old Mr. Turveydrop is a very gentlemanly man indeed—very gentlemanly."

"Does his wife know of it?" asked Ada.

"Old Mr. Turveydrop's wife, Miss Clare?" returned Miss Jellyby, opening her eyes. "There's no such person. He is a widower."

We were here interrupted by Peepy, whose leg had undergone so much on account of his sister's *unconsciously jerking* it like a bell-rope whenever she was

emphatic, that the afflicted child now bemoaned his sufferings with a very spirited noise. As he appealed to me for compassion, and as I was only a list I undertook to hold him. Miss Jellyby proceeded, after begging Peepy's pa with a kiss, and assuring him that she hadn't meant to do it.

"That's the state of the case," said Caddy. "If I ever blame myself, I think it's Ma's fault. We are to be married whenever we can, and then I sha to Pa at the office and write to Ma. It won't much agitate Ma; I am only and ink to *her*. One great comfort is," said Caddy, with a sob, "that I never hear of Africa after I am married. Young Mr. Turveydrop hates it fo sake; and if old Mr. Turveydrop knows there is such a place, it's as much does."

"It was he who was very gentlemanly, I think!" said I.

"Very gentlemanly, indeed," said Caddy. "He is celebrated, almost e where, for his Deportment."

"Does he teach?" asked Ada.

"No, he don't teach anything in particular," replied Caddy. "But his De ment is beautiful."

Caddy went on to say, with considerable hesitation and reluctance, that was one thing more she wished us to know, and felt we ought to know, and she hoped would not offend us. It was, that she had improved her acquaint with Miss Flite, the little crazy old lady; and that she frequently went there in the morning, and met her lover for a few minutes before breakfast—only few minutes. "*I* go there, at other times," said Caddy, "but Prince does not then. Young Mr. Turveydrop's name is Prince; I wish it wasn't, becau sounds like a dog, but of course he didn't christen himself. Old Mr. Turvey had him christened Prince, in remembrance of the Prince Regent. Old Turveydrop adored the Prince Regent on account of his Deportment. I hope won't think the worse of me for having made these little appointments at Flite's, where I first went with you; because I like the poor thing for her sake, and I believe she likes me. If you could see young Mr. Turveydrop, I sure you would think well of him—at least, I am sure you couldn't possibly t any ill of him. I am going there now, for my lesson. I couldn't ask you t with me, Miss Summerson; but if you would," said Caddy, who had said all earnestly and tremblingly, "I should be very glad—very glad."

It happened that we had arranged with my guardian to go to Miss Flite's day. We had told him of our former visit, and our account had interested h but something had always happened to prevent our going there again. trusted that I might have sufficient influence with Miss Jellyby to prevent taking any very rash step, if I fully accepted the confidence she was so willi place in me, poor girl, I proposed that she and I and Peepy should go to Academy, and afterwards meet my guardian and Ada at Miss Flite's—whose I now learnt for the first time. This was on condition that Miss Jellyby Peepy should come back with us to dinner. The last article of the agreem being joyfully acceded to by both, we smartened Peepy up a little, with assistance of a few pins, some soap and water, and a hair-brush; and went bending our steps towards Newman Street, which was very near.

I found the academy established in a sufficiently dingy house at the corner archway, with busts in all the staircase windows. In the same house there also established, as I gathered from the plates on the door, a drawing-mast coal-merchant (there was, certainly, no room for his coals), and a lithogr artist. On the plate which, in size and situation, took precedence of all the r read, Mr. TURVEYDROP. The door was open, and the hall was blocked up grand piano, a harp, and several other musical instruments in cases, all in pro

looking rakish in the daylight. Miss Jellyby informed me
ad been lent, last night, for a concert.
s—it had been quite a fine house once, when it was anybody's
clean and fresh, and nobody's business to smoke in it all day—
ydrop's great room, which was built out into a mews at the
ed by a skylight. It was a bare, resounding room, smelling of
forms along the walls; and the walls ornamented at regular
ed lyres, and little cut-glass branches for candles, which seemed
ir old-fashioned drops as other branches might shed autumn
ung lady pupils, ranging from thirteen or fourteen years of age
twenty, were assembled; and I was looking among them for
en Caddy, pinching my arm, repeated the ceremony of intro-
ummerson, Mr. Prince Turveydrop!"
little blue-eyed fair man of youthful appearance, with flaxen
iddle, and curling at the ends all round his head. He had a
we used to call at school a kit, under his left arm, and its little
nd. His little dancing-shoes were particularly diminutive, and
cent, feminine manner, which not only appealed to me in an
ade this singular effect upon me: that I received the impression
mother, and that his mother had not been much considered or

y to see Miss Jellyby's friend," he said, bowing low to me.
" with timid tenderness, "as it was past the usual time, that
ot coming."
have the goodness to attribute that to me, who have detained
my excuses, sir," said I.
he.
entreated, "do not allow me to be the cause of any more

gy I withdrew to a seat between Peepy (who, being well used
limbed into a corner place) and an old lady of a censorious
two nieces were in the class, and who was very indignant with
ince Turveydrop then tinkled the strings of his kit with his
ng ladies stood up to dance. Just then, there appeared from
. Turveydrop, in the full lustre of his Deportment.
gentleman with a false complexion, false teeth, false whiskers,
l a fur collar, and he had a padded breast to his coat, which
or a broad blue ribbon to be complete. He was pinched in,
d got up, and strapped down, as much as he could possibly
h a neckcloth on (puffing his very eyes out of their natural
and even his ears so sunk into it, that it seemed as though he
ble up, if it were cast loose. He had, under his arm, a hat of
at, shelving downward from the crown to the brim; and in his
e gloves, with which he flapped it, as he stood poised on one
dered, round-elbowed state of elegance not to be surpassed.
had an eye-class, he had a snuff-box, he had rings, he had
everything but any touch of nature; he was not like youth,
, he was not like anything in the world but a model of Deport-

itor. Miss Jellyby's friend, Miss Summerson."
said Mr. Turveydrop, "by Miss Summerson's presence."
in that tight state, I almost believe I saw creases come into
es.

"My father," said the son, aside, to me, with quite an affecting belief in him, "is a celebrated character. My father is greatly admired."

"Go on, Prince! Go on!" said Mr. Turveydrop, standing with his back to the fire, and waving his gloves condescendingly. "Go on, my son!"

At this command, or by this gracious permission, the lesson went on. Prince Turveydrop sometimes played the kit, dancing; sometimes played the piano, standing; sometimes hummed the tune with what little breath he could spare, while he set a pupil right; always conscientiously moved with the least proficient through every step and every part of the figure; and never rested for an instant. His distinguished father did nothing whatever, but stand before the fire, a model of Deportment.

"And he never does anything else," said the old lady of the censorious countenance. "Yet would you believe that it's *his* name on the door-plate?"

"His son's name is the same, you know," said I.

"He wouldn't let his son have any name, if he could take it from him," returned the old lady. "Look at the son's dress!" It certainly was plain—threadbare—almost shabby. "Yet the father must be garnished and tricked out," said the old lady, "because of his Deportment. I'd deport him! Transport him would be better!"

I felt curious to know more, concerning this person. I asked, "Does he give lessons in Deportment, now?"

"Now!" returned the old lady, shortly. "Never did."

After a moment's consideration, I suggested that perhaps fencing had been his accomplishment?

"I don't believe he can fence at all, ma'am," said the old lady.

I looked surprised and inquisitive. The old lady, becoming more and more incensed against the Master of Deportment as she dwelt upon the subject, gave me some particulars of his career, with strong assurances that they were mildly stated.

He had married a meek little dancing-mistress, with a tolerable connexion (having never in his life before done anything but deport himself), and had worked her to death, or had, at the best, suffered her to work herself to death, to maintain him in those expenses which were indispensable to his position. At once to exhibit his Deportment to the best models, and to keep the best models constantly before himself, he had found it necessary to frequent all public places of fashionable and lounging resort; to be seen at Brighton and elsewhere at fashionable times; and to lead an idle life in the very best clothes. To enable him to do this, the affectionate little dancing-mistress had toiled and laboured, and would have toiled and laboured to that hour, if her strength had lasted so long. For, the mainspring of the story was, that, in spite of the man's absorbing selfishness, his wife (overpowered by his Deportment) had, to the last, believed in him, and had, on her death-bed, in the most moving terms, confided him to their son as one who had an inextinguishable claim upon him, and whom he could never regard with too much pride and deference. The son, inheriting his mother's belief, and having the Deportment always before him, had lived and grown in the same faith, and now, at thirty years of age, worked for his father twelve hours a-day, and looked up to him with veneration on the old imaginary pinnacle.

"The airs the fellow gives himself!" said my informant, shaking her head at old Mr. Turveydrop with speechless indignation as he drew on his tight gloves: of course unconscious of the homage she was rendering. "He fully believes he is one of the aristocracy! And he is so condescending to the son he so egregiously deludes, that you might suppose him the most virtuous of parents. O!" said the old lady, apostrophising him with infinite vehemence, "I could bite you!"

ld not help being amused, though I heard the old lady out with feelings
concern. It was difficult to doubt her, with the father and son before me.
might have thought of them without the old lady's account, or what I
ave thought of the old lady's account without them, I cannot say. There
itness of things in the whole that carried conviction with it.
yes were yet wandering, from young Mr. Turveydrop working so hard,
Mr. Turveydrop deporting himself so beautifully, when the latter came
g up to me, and entered into conversation.
sked me, first of all, whether I conferred a charm and a distinction on
n by residing in it? I did not think it necessary to reply that I was per-
ware I should not do that, in any case, but merely told him where I did

lady so graceful and accomplished," he said, kissing his right glove, and
rds extending it towards the pupils, "will look leniently on the deficiencies
We do our best to polish—polish—polish!"
t down beside me; taking some pains to sit on the form, I thought, in
n of the print of his illustrious model on the sofa. And really he did
ry like it.
polish—polish—polish!" he repeated, taking a pinch of snuff and gently
g his fingers. "But we are not—if I may say so, to one formed to be
both by Nature and Art;" with the high-shouldered bow, which it
impossible for him to make without lifting up his eyebrows and shutting
—"we are not what we used to be in point of Deportment."
we not, sir?" said I.
have degenerated," he returned, shaking his head, which he could do, to
mited extent, in his cravat, "A levelling age is not favourable to Deport-
It develops vulgarity. Perhaps I speak with some little partiality. It
be for me to say that I have been called, for some years now, Gentleman
drop; or that His Royal Highness the Prince Regent did me the honour
re, on my removing my hat as he drove out of the Pavilion at Brighton
e building), 'Who is he? Who the Devil is he? Why don't I know
Why hasn't he thirty thousand a-year?' But these are little matters of
e—the general property, ma'am,—still repeated, occasionally, among the
lasses."
eed?" said I.
plied with the high-shouldered bow. "Where what is left among us of
ment," he added, "still lingers. England—alas, my country!—has de-
d very much, and is degenerating every day. She has not many gentle-
. We are few. I see nothing to succeed us, but a race of weavers."
might hope that the race of gentlemen would be perpetuated here,"

are very good," he smiled, with the high-shouldered bow again. "You
ne. But, no—no! I have never been able to imbue my poor boy with
of his art. Heaven forbid that I should disparage my dear child, but he
Department."
appears to be an excellent master," I observed.
derstand me, my dear madam, he *is* an excellent master. All that can be
, he has acquired. All that can be imparted, he can impart. But there
gs"—he took another pinch of snuff and made the bow again, as if to
his kind of thing, for instance."
ceed towards the centre of the room, where Miss Jellyby's lover, now
with single pupils, was undergoing greater drudgery than ever.
amiable child," *murmured Mr. Turveydrop*, adjusting his cravat.

"Your son is indefatigable," said I.

"It is my reward," said Mr. Turveydrop, "to hear you say so. In some respects, he treads in the footsteps of his sainted mother. She was a devoted creature. But Wooman, lovely Wooman," said Mr. Turveydrop, with very disagreeable gallantry, "what a sex you are!"

I rose and joined Miss Jellyby, who was, by this time, putting on her bonnet. The time allotted to a lesson having fully elapsed, there was a general putting on of bonnets. When Miss Jellyby and the unfortunate Prince found an opportunity to become betrothed I don't know, but they certainly found none, on this occasion, to exchange a dozen words.

"My dear," said Mr. Turveydrop benignly to his son, "do you know the hour?"

"No, father." The son had no watch. The father had a handsome gold one, which he pulled out, with an air that was an example to mankind.

"My son," said he, "it's two o'clock. Recollect your school at Kensington at three."

"That's time enough for me, father," said Prince. "I can take a morsel of dinner, standing, and be off."

"My dear boy," returned his father, "you must be very quick. You will find the cold mutton on the table."

"Thank you, father. Are *you* off now, father?"

"Yes, my dear. I suppose," said Mr. Turveydrop, shutting his eyes and lifting up his shoulders, with modest consciousness, "that I must show myself, as usual, about town."

"You had better dine out comfortably, somewhere," said his son.

"My dear child, I intend to. I shall take my little meal, I think, at the French house, in the Opera Colonnade."

"That's right. Good-bye, father!" said Prince, shaking hands.

"Good-bye, my son. Bless you!"

Mr. Turveydrop said this in quite a pious manner, and it seemed to do his son good; who, in parting from him, was so pleased with him, so dutiful to him, and so proud of him, that I almost felt as if it were an unkindness to the younger man not to be able to believe implicitly in the elder. The few moments that were occupied by Prince in taking leave of us (and particularly of one of us, as I saw, being in the secret), enhanced my favourable impression of his almost childish character. I felt a liking for him, and a compassion for him, as he put his little kit in his pocket—and with it his desire to stay a little while with Caddy—and went away good-humouredly to his cold mutton and his school at Kensington, that made me scarcely less irate with his father than the censorious old lady.

The father opened the room-door for us, and bowed us out, in a manner, I must acknowledge, worthy of his shining original. In the same style he presently passed us on the other side of the street, on his way to the aristocratic part of the town, where he was going to show himself among the few other gentlemen left. For some moments, I was so lost in reconsidering what I had heard and seen in Newman Street, that I was quite unable to talk to Caddy, or even to fix my attention on what she said to me: especially when I began to inquire in my mind whether there were, or ever had been, any other gentlemen, not in the dancing profession, who lived and founded a reputation entirely on their Deportment. This became so bewildering, and suggested the possibility, of so many Mr. Turveydrops, that I said, "Esther, you must make up your mind to abandon this subject altogether, and attend to Caddy." I accordingly did so, and we chatted all the rest of the way to Lincoln's Inn.

Caddy told me that her lover's education had been so neglected, that it was not

always easy to read his notes. She said, if he were not so anxious about his spelling, and took less pains to make it clear, he would do better; but he put so many unnecessary letters into short words, that they sometimes quite lost their English appearance. "He does it with the best intention," observed Caddy, "but it hasn't the effect he means, poor fellow!" Caddy then went on to reason, how could he be expected to be a scholar, when he had passed his whole life in the dancing-school, and had done nothing but teach and fag, fag and teach, morning, noon, and night! And what did it matter? She could write letters enough for both, as she knew to her cost, and it was far better for him to be amiable than learned. "Besides, it's not as if I was an accomplished girl, who had any right to give herself airs," said Caddy. "I know little enough, I am sure, thanks to Ma!"

"There's another thing I want to tell you, now we are alone," continued Caddy, "which I should not have liked to mention unless you had seen Prince, Miss Summerson. You know what a house ours is. It's of no use my trying to learn anything that it would be useful for Prince's wife to know, in *our* house. We live in such a state of muddle that it's impossible, and I have only been more disheartened whenever I have tried. So, I get a little practice with—who do you think? Poor Miss Flite! Early in the morning, I help her to tidy her room, and clean her birds; and I make her cup of coffee for her (of course she taught me), and I have learnt to make it so well that Prince says it's the very best coffee he ever tasted, and would quite delight old Mr. Turveydrop, who is very particular indeed about his coffee. I can make little puddings too; and I know how to buy neck of mutton, and tea, and sugar, and butter, and a good many housekeeping things. I am not clever at my needle, yet," said Caddy, glancing at the repairs on Peepy's frock, "but perhaps I shall improve, and since I have been engaged to Prince, and have been doing all this, I have felt better-tempered, I hope, and more forgiving to Ma. It rather put me out, at first this morning, to see you and Miss Clare looking so neat and pretty, and to feel ashamed of Peepy and myself too; but, on the whole, I hope I am better-tempered than I was, and more forgiving to Ma."

The poor girl, trying so hard, said it from her heart, and touched mine. "Caddy, my love," I replied, "I begin to have a great affection for you, and I hope we shall become friends." "Oh, do you?" cried Caddy; "how happy that would make me!" "My dear Caddy," said I, "let us be friends from this time, and let us often have a chat about these matters, and try to find the right way through them." Caddy was overjoyed. I said everything I could, in my old-fashioned way, to comfort and encourage her; and I would not have objected to old Mr. Turveydrop, that day, for any smaller consideration than a settlement on his daughter-in-law.

By this time, we were come to Mr. Krook's, whose private door stood open. There was a bill, pasted on the door-post, announcing a room to let on the second floor. It reminded Caddy to tell me as we proceeded up-stairs, that there had been a sudden death there, and an inquest; and that our little friend had been ill of the fright. The door and window of the vacant room being open, we looked in. It was the room with the dark door, to which Miss Flite had secretly directed my attention when I was last in the house. A sad and desolate place it was; a gloomy, sorrowful place, that gave me a strange sensation of mournfulness and even dread. "You look pale," said Caddy, when we came out, "and cold!" I felt as if the room had chilled me.

We had walked slowly, while we were talking; and my guardian and Ada were here before us. We found them in Miss Flite's garret. They were looking at the birds, while a medical gentleman who was so good as to attend Miss Flite with much solicitude and compassion, spoke with her cheerfully by the fire.

"I have finished *my professional visit*," he said coming forward. "Miss Flite

is much better, and may appear in Court (as her mind is set upon it) to-morrow. She has been greatly missed there, I understand."

Miss Flite received the compliment with complacency, and dropped a general curtsey to us.

"Honoured, indeed," said she, "by another visit from the wards in Jarndyce! Ve-ry happy to receive Jarndyce of Bleak House beneath my humble roof!" with a special curtsey. "Fitz-Jarndyce, my dear;" she had bestowed that name on Caddy, it appeared, and always called her by it; "a double welcome!"

"Has she been very ill?" asked Mr. Jarndyce of the gentleman whom we had found in attendance on her. She answered for herself directly, though he had put the question in a whisper.

"O decidedly unwell! O very unwell indeed," she said, confidentially. "Not pain, you know—trouble. Not bodily so much as nervous, nervous! The truth is," in a subdued voice and trembling, "we have had death here. There was poison in the house. I am very susceptible to such horrid things. It frightened me. Only Mr. Woodcourt knows how much. My physician, Mr. Woodcourt!" with great stateliness. "The wards in Jarndyce—Jarndyce of Bleak House—Fitz-Jarndyce!"

"Miss Flite," said Mr. Woodcourt, in a grave kind of voice as if he were appealing to her while speaking to us; and laying his hand gently on her arm; "Miss Flite describes her illness with her usual accuracy. She was alarmed by an occurrence in the house which might have alarmed a stronger person, and was made ill by the distress and agitation. She brought me here, in the first hurry of the discovery, though too late for me to be of any use to the unfortunate man. I have compensated myself for that disappointment by coming here since, and being of some small use to her."

"The kindest physician in the college," whispered Miss Flite to me. "I expect a Judgment. On the day of Judgment. And shall then confer estates."

"She will be as well, in a day or two," said Mr. Woodcourt, looking at her with an observant smile, "as she ever will be. In other words, quite well of course. Have you heard of her good fortune?"

"Most extraordinary!" said Miss Flite, smiling brightly. "You never heard of such a thing, my dear! Every Saturday, Conversation Kenge, or Guppy (clerk to Conversation K.), places in my hand a paper of shillings. Shillings. I assure you! Always the same number in the paper. Always one for every day in the week. Now you know, really! So well-timed, is it not? Ye-es! From whence do these papers come, you say? That is the great question. Naturally. Shall I tell you what *I* think? *I* think," said Miss Flite, drawing herself back with a very shrewd look, and shaking her right forefinger in a most significant manner, "that the Lord Chancellor, aware of the length of time during which the Great Seal has been open, (for it has been open a long time!) forwards them. Until the Judgment I expect, is given. Now that's very creditable, you know. To confess in that way that he *is* a little slow for human life. So delicate! Attending Court the other day—I attend it regularly—with my documents—I taxed him with it, and he almost confessed. That is, I smiled at him from my bench, and *he* smiled at me from his bench. But it's great good fortune, is it not? And Fitz-Jarndyce lays the money out for me to great advantage. O, I assure you to the greatest advantage!"

I congratulated her (as she addressed herself to me) upon this fortunate addition to her income, and wished her a long continuance of it. I did not speculate upon the source from which it came, or wonder whose humanity was so considerate. My guardian stood before me, contemplating the birds, and I had no need to look *beyond him*.

d what do you call these little fellows, ma'am?" said he in his pleasant
"Have they any names?"
an answer for Miss Flite that they have," said I, "for she promised to tell
t they were. Ada remembers?"
remembered very well.
I I?" said Miss Flite—"Who's that at my door? What are you listenmg
loor for, Krook?"
old man of the house, pushing it open before him, appeared there with his
in his hand, and his cat at his heels.
'arn't listening, Miss Flite," he said. "I was going to give a rap with my
s, only you're so quick!"
ke your cat go down. Drive her away!" the old lady angrily exclaimed.
h, bah!—There ain't no danger, gentlefolks," said Mr. Krook, looking
nd sharply from one to another, until he had looked at all of us; "she'd
ffer at the birds when I was here, unless I told her to it."
u will excuse my landlord," said the old lady with a dignified air. "M,
I! What do you want, Krook, when I have company?"
!" said the old man. "You know I am the Chancellor."
ell?" returned Miss Flite. "What of that?"
r the Chancellor," said the old man, with a chuckle, "not to be acquainted
Jarndyce is queer, ain't it, Miss Flite? Mightn't I take the liberty?—
ervant, sir. I know Jarndyce and Jarndyce a'most as well as you do, sir.
ed old Squire Tom, sir. I never to my knowledge see you afore though,
n in Court. Yet, I go there a mortal sight of times in the course of the
king one day with another."
ever go there," said Mr. Jarndyce (which he never did on any consideration).
ld sooner go—somewhere else."
ould you though?" returned Krook, grinning. "You're bearing hard
ıy noble and learned brother in your meaning, sir; though, perhaps, it is
'ral in a Jarndyce. The burnt child, sir! What, you're looking at my
birds, Mr. Jarndyce?" The old man had come by little and little into
m, until he now touched my guardian with his elbow, and looked close up
face with his spectacled eyes. "It's one of her strange ways, that she'll
ll the names of these birds if she can help it, though she named 'em all."
s in a whisper, "Shall I run 'em over, Flite?" he asked aloud, winking
d pointing at her as she turned away, affecting to sweep the grate.
ou like," she answered hurriedly.
old man, looking up at the cages, after another look at us, went through

pe, Joy, Youth, Peace, Rest, Life, Dust, Ashes, Waste, Want, Ruin,
, Madness, Death, Cunning, Folly, Words, Wigs, Rags, Sheepskin,
r, Precedent, Jargon, Gammon, and Spinach. That's the whole collection,"
old man, "all cooped up together, by my noble and learned brother."
is is a bitter wind!" muttered my guardian.
ien my noble and learned brother gives his Judgment, they're to be let go
aid Krook, winking at us again. "And then," he added, whispering and
g, "if that ever was to happen—which it won't—the birds that have never
ged would kill 'em."
ver the wind was in the east," said my guardian, pretending to look out of
dow for a weathercock, "I think it's there to-day!"
found it very difficult to get away from the house. It was not Miss Flite
tained us; she was as reasonable a little creature in consulting the con-
of others, as *there possibly could* be. It was Mr. Krook. He seemed

unable to detach himself from Mr. Jarndyce. If he had been linked to him, he could hardly have attended him more closely. He proposed to show us his Court of Chancery, and all the strange medley it contained; during the whole of our inspection (prolonged by himself) he kept close to Mr. Jarndyce, and sometimes detained him, under one pretence or other, until we had passed on, as if he were tormented by an inclination to enter upon some secret subject, which he could not make up his mind to approach. I cannot imagine a countenance and manner more singularly expressive of caution and indecision, and a perpetual impulse to do something he could not resolve to venture on, than Mr. Krook's was, that day. His watchfulness of my guardian was incessant. He rarely removed his eyes from his face. If he went on beside him, he observed him with the slyness of an old white fox. If he went before he looked back. When we stood still, he got opposite to him, and drawing his hand across and across his open mouth with a curious expression of a sense of power, and turning up his eyes, and lowering his grey eyebrows until they appeared to be shut, seemed to scan every lineament of his face.

At last, having been (always attended by the cat) all over the house, and having seen the whole stock of miscellaneous lumber, which was certainly curious, we came into the back part of the shop. Here, on the head of an empty barrel stood on end, were an ink-bottle, some old stumps of pens, and some dirty playbills; and, against the wall, were pasted several large printed alphabets in several plain hands.

"What are you doing here?" asked my guardian.

"Trying to learn myself to read and write," said Krook.

"And how do you get on?"

"Slow. Bad," returned the old man, impatiently. "It's hard at my time of life."

"It would be easier to be taught by some one," said my guardian.

"Aye, but they might teach me wrong!" returned the old man, with a wonderfully suspicious flash of his eye. "I don't know what I may have lost, by not being learnd afore. I wouldn't like to lose anything by being learnd wrong now."

"Wrong?" said my guardian, with his good-humoured smile. "Who do you suppose would teach you wrong?"

"I don't know, Mr. Jarndyce of Bleak House!" replied the old man, turning up his spectacles on his forehead, and rubbing his hands. "I don't suppose as anybody would—but I'd rather trust my own self than another!"

These answers, and his manner, were strange enough to cause my guardian to inquire of Mr. Woodcourt, as we all walked across Lincoln's Inn together, whether Mr. Krook were really, as his lodger represented him, deranged? The young surgeon replied, no, he had seen no reason to think so. He was exceedingly distrustful, as ignorance usually was, and he was always more or less under the influence of raw gin: of which he drank great quantities, and of which he and his back-shop, as we might have observed, smelt strongly; but he did not think him mad, as yet.

On our way home, I so conciliated Peepy's affections by buying him a windmill and two flour-sacks, that he would suffer nobody else to take off his hat and gloves, and would sit nowhere at dinner but at my side. Caddy sat upon the other side of me, next to Ada, to whom we imparted the whole history of the engagement as soon as we got back. We made much of Caddy, and Peepy too; and Caddy brightened exceedingly; and my guardian was as merry as we were; and we were all very happy indeed; until Caddy went home at night in a hackney-coach, with *Peepy fast asleep*, but holding tight to the windmill.

e forgotten to mention—at least I have not mentioned—that Mr. Wood-
as the same dark young surgeon whom we had met at Mr. Badger's. Or,
r. Jarndyce invited him to dinner that day. Or, that he came. Or, that
hey were all gone, and I said to Ada, "Now, my darling, let us have a little
out Richard!" Ada laughed and said——
I don't think it matters what my darling said. She was always merry.

CHAPTER XV.

BELL YARD.

E we were in London, Mr. Jarndyce was constantly beset by the crowd of
le ladies and gentlemen whose proceedings had so much astonished us.
ale, who presented himself soon after our arrival, was in all such excite-
He seemed to project those two shining knobs of temples of his into
ing that went on, and to brush his hair farther and farther back, until the
ots were almost ready to fly out of his head in inappeasable philanthropy.
jects were alike to him, but he was always particularly ready for anything in
y of a testimonial to any one. His great power seemed to be his power of
minate admiration. He would sit, for any length of time, with the utmost
ent, bathing his temples in the light of any order of luminary. Having
en him perfectly swallowed up in admiration of Mrs. Jellyby, I had supposed
be the absorbing object of his devotion. I soon discovered my mistake, and
him to be train-bearer and organ-blower to a whole procession of people.
. Pardiggle came one day for a subscription to something—and with her,
ale. Whatever Mrs. Pardiggle said, Mr. Quale repeated to us; and just
ad drawn Mrs. Jellyby out, he drew Mrs. Pardiggle out. Mrs. Pardiggle
a letter of introduction to my guardian, in behalf of her eloquent friend, Mr.
r. With Mr. Gusher, appeared Mr. Quale again. Mr. Gusher, being a
gentleman with a moist surface, and eyes so much too small for his moon
ce that they seemed to have been originally made for somebody else, was not
sight prepossessing; yet, he was scarcely seated, before Mr. Quale asked
nd me, not inaudibly, whether he was not a great creature—which he
ly was, flabbily speaking; though Mr. Quale meant in intellectual beauty—
hether we were not struck by his massive configuration of brow? In short,
rd of a great many Missions of various sorts, among this set of people; but,
g respecting them was half so clear to us, as that it was Mr. Quale's mission
n ecstasies with everybody else's mission, and that it was the most popular
n of all.
Jarndyce had fallen into this company, in the tenderness of his heart and
nest desire to do all the good in his power; but, that he felt it to be too
n unsatisfactory company, where benevolence took spasmodic forms; where
was assumed, as a regular uniform, by loud professors and speculators in
notoriety, vehement in profession, restless and vain in action, servile in the
gree of meanness to the great, adulatory of one another, and intolerable to
who were anxious quietly to help the weak from falling, rather than with a
leal of bluster and self-laudation to raise them up a little way when they
own; he plainly told us. When a testimonial was originated to Mr. Quale,
. Gusher (who had already got one, originated by Mr. Quale), and when Mr.
spoke for an hour and a half on the subject to a meeting, including two
schools of small boys *and girls*, who were specially reminded of the

widow's mite, and requested to come forward with halfpence and be acceptable sacrifices; I think the wind was in the east for three whole weeks.

I mention this, because I am coming to Mr. Skimpole again. It seemed to me, that his off-hand professions of childishness and carelessness were a great relief to my guardian, by contrast with such things, and were the more readily believed in; since, to find one perfectly undesigning and candid man, among many opposites, could not fail to give him pleasure. I should be sorry to imply that Mr. Skimpole divined this, and was politic: I really never understood him well enough to know. What he was to my guardian, he certainly was to the rest of the world.

He had not been very well; and thus, though he lived in London, we had seen nothing of him until now. He appeared one morning, in his usual agreeable way, and as full of pleasant spirits as ever.

Well, he said, here he was! He had been bilious, but rich men were often bilious, and therefore he had been persuading himself that he was a man of property. So he was, in a certain point of view—in his expansive intentions. He had been enriching his medical attendant in the most lavish manner. He had always doubled, and sometimes quadrupled, his fees. He had said to the doctor, "Now, my dear doctor, it is quite a delusion on your part to suppose that you attend me for nothing. I am overwhelming you with money—in my expansive intentions—if you only knew it!" And really (he said) he meant it to that degree, that he thought it much the same as doing it. If he had had those bits of metal or thin paper, to which mankind attached so much importance, to put in the doctor's hand, he would have put them in the doctor's hand. Not having them, he substituted the will for the deed. Very well! If he really meant it—if his will were genuine and real: which it was—it appeared to him that it was the same as coin, and cancelled the obligation.

"It may be, partly, because I know nothing of the value of money," said Mr. Skimpole, "but I often feel this. It seems so reasonable! My butcher says to me, he wants that little bill. It's a part of the pleasant unconscious poetry of the man's nature, that he always calls it a 'little' bill—to make the payment appear easy to both of us. I reply to the butcher, My good friend, if you knew it you are paid. You haven't had the trouble of coming to ask for the little bill. You are paid. I mean it."

"But, suppose," said my guardian, laughing, "he had meant the meat in the bill, instead of providing it?"

"My dear Jarndyce," he returned, "you surprise me. You take the butcher's position. A butcher I once dealt with, occupied that very ground. Says he, 'Sir, why did you eat spring lamb at eighteen-pence a pound?' 'Why did I eat spring lamb at eighteen-pence a pound, my honest friend?' said I, naturally amazed by the question. 'I like spring lamb!' This was so far convincing. 'Well, sir,' says he, 'I wish I had meant the lamb as you mean the money!' 'My good fellow,' said I, 'pray let us reason like intellectual beings. How could that be? It was impossible. You *had* got the lamb, and I have *not* got the money. You couldn't really mean the lamb without sending it in, whereas I can, and do, really mean the money without paying it!' He had not a word. There was an end of the subject."

"Did he take no legal proceedings?" inquired my guardian.

"Yes, he took legal proceedings," said Mr. Skimpole. "But, in that, he was influenced by passion; not by reason. Passion reminds me of Boythorn. He writes me that you and the ladies have promised him a short visit at his bachelor-house in Lincolnshire."

"He is a great favourite with my girls," said Mr. Jarndyce, "and I have *promised for them.*"

"Nature forgot to shade him off, I think?" observed Mr. Skimpole to Ada and me. "A little too boisterous—like the sea? A little too vehement—like a bull, who has made up his mind to consider every colour scarlet? But, I grant a sledge-hammering sort of merit in him!"

I should have been surprised if those two could have thought very highly of one another: Mr. Boythorn attaching so much importance to many things, and Mr. Skimpole caring so little for anything. Besides which, I had noticed Mr. Boythorn more than once on the point of breaking out into some strong opinion, when Mr. Skimpole was referred to. Of course I merely joined Ada in saying that we had been greatly pleased with him.

"He has invited me," said Mr. Skimpole; "and if a child may trust himself in such hands: which the present child is encouraged to do, with the united tenderness of two angels to guard him: I shall go. He proposes to frank me down and back again. I suppose it will cost money? Shillings perhaps? Or pounds? Or something of that sort? By-the-bye. Coavinses. You remember our friend Coavinses, Miss Summerson?"

He asked me, as the subject arose in his mind, in his graceful light-hearted manner, and without the least embarrassment.

"O yes!" said I.

"Coavinses has been arrested by the great Bailiff," said Mr. Skimpole. "He will never do violence to the sunshine any more."

It quite shocked me to hear it; for, I had already recalled, with anything but a serious association, the image of the man sitting on the sofa that night, wiping his head.

"His successor informed me of it yesterday," said Mr. Skimpole. "His successor is in my house now—in possession, I think he calls it. He came yesterday, on my blue-eyed daughter's birthday. I put it to him, 'This is unreasonable and inconvenient. If you had a blue-eyed daughter you wouldn't like *me* to come, uninvited, on *her* birthday?' But, he stayed."

Mr. Skimpole laughed at the pleasant absurdity, and lightly touched the piano by which he was seated.

"And he told me," he said, playing little chords where I shall put full stops, "The Coavinses had left. Three children. No mother. And that Coavinses' profession. Being unpopular. The rising Coavinses. Were at a considerable disadvantage."

Mr. Jarndyce got up, rubbing his head, and began to walk about. Mr. Skimpole played the melody of one of Ada's favourite songs. Ada and I both looked at Mr. Jarndyce, thinking that we knew what was passing in his mind.

After walking and stopping, and several times leaving off rubbing his head, and beginning again, my guardian put his hand upon the keys and stopped Mr. Skimpole's playing. "I don't like this, Skimpole," he said thoughtfully.

Mr. Skimpole, who had quite forgotten the subject, looked up surprised.

"The man was necessary," pursued my guardian, walking backward and forward in the very short space between the piano and the end of the room, and rubbing his hair up from the back of his head as if a high east wind had blown it into that form. "If we make such men necessary by our faults and follies, or by our want of worldly knowledge, or by our misfortunes, we must not revenge ourselves upon them. There was no harm in his trade. He maintained his children. One would like to know more about this."

"O! Coavinses?" cried Mr. Skimpole, at length perceiving what he meant. "Nothing easier. A walk to Coavinses' head-quarters, and you can know what you will."

Mr. Jarndyce nodded *to us, who were only* waiting for the signal. "Come".

We will walk that way, my dears. Why not that way, as soon as another!" were quickly ready, and went out. Mr. Skimpole went with us, and quite enj the expedition. It was so new and so refreshing, he said, for him to Coavinses, instead of Coavinses wanting him!

He took us, first, to Cursitor Street, Chancery Lane, where there was a h with barred windows, which he called Coavinses' Castle. On our going int entry and ringing a bell, a very hideous boy came out of a sort of office, looked at us over a spiked wicket.

"Who did you want?" said the boy, fitting two of the spikes into his chi

"There was a follower, or an officer, or something, here," said Mr. Jarn "who is dead."

"Yes?" said the boy. "Well?"

"I want to know his name, if you please?"

"Name of Neckett," said the boy.

"And his address?"

"Bell Yard," said the boy. "Chandler's shop, left hand side, name of Blin

"Was he—I don't know how to shape the question," murmured my gua —"industrious?"

"Was Neckett?" said the boy. "Yes, wery much so. He was never tir watching. He'd set upon a post at a street corner, eight or ten hours at a str if he undertook to do it."

"He might have done worse," I heard my guardian soliloquize. "He m have undertaken to do it, and not done it. Thank you. That's all I want."

We left the boy, with his head on one side, and his arms on the gate, fon and sucking the spikes; and went back to Lincoln's Inn, where Mr. Skim who had not cared to remain nearer Coavinses, awaited us. Then, we all we Bell Yard: a narrow alley, at a very short distance. We soon found the chan shop. In it, was a good-natured-looking old woman, with a dropsy, or an ast or perhaps both.

"Neckett's children?" said she, in reply to my inquiry. "Yes, surely, Three pair, if you please. Door right opposite the stairs." And she handed the key across the counter.

I glanced at the key, and glanced at her; but she took it for granted th knew what to do with it. As it could only be intended for the children's do came out, without asking any more questions, and led the way up the dark st We went as quietly as we could; but, four of us made some noise on the boards; and, when we came to the second story, we found we had disturb man who was standing there, looking out of his room.

"Is it Gridley that's wanted?" he said, fixing his eyes on me with an angry s

"No, sir," said I, "I am going higher up."

He looked at Ada, and at Mr. Jarndyce, and at Mr. Skimpole: fixing the s angry stare on each in succession, as they passed and followed me. Mr. Jarn gave him good day. "Good day!" he said, abruptly and fiercely. He was a sallow man, with a careworn head, on which but little hair remained, a de lined face, and prominent eyes. He had a combative look; and a cha irritable manner, which, associated with his figure—still large and powerful, tho evidently in its decline—rather alarmed me. He had a pen in his hand, an the glimpse I caught of his room in passing, I saw that it was covered with a l of papers.

Leaving him standing there, we went up to the top room. I tapped at the d and a little shrill voice inside said, "We are locked in. Mrs. Blinder 's got the k

I applied the key on hearing this, and opened the door. In a poor room, a sloping ceiling, and containing very little furniture, was a mite of a boy, s

six years old, nursing and hushing a heavy child of eighteen months. was no fire, though the weather was cold; both children were wrapped in our shawls and tippets, as a substitute. Their clothing was not so warm, r, but that their noses looked red and pinched, and their small figures en, as the boy walked up and down, nursing and hushing the child with its n his shoulder.

ho has locked you up here alone?" we naturally asked.

arley," said the boy, standing still to gaze at us.

Charley your brother?"

). She's my sister, Charlotte. Father called her Charley."

e there any more of you besides Charley?"

:," said the boy, "and Emma," patting the limp bonnet of the child he rsing. "And Charley."

here is Charley now?"

it a-washing," said the boy, beginning to walk up and down again, and the nankeen bonnet much too near the bedstead, by trying to gaze at us at ne time.

were looking at one another, and at these two children, when there came e room a very little girl, childish in figure but shrewd and older-looking in e—pretty-faced too—wearing a womanly sort of bonnet much too large for d drying her bare arms on a womanly sort of apron. Her fingers were nd wrinkled with washing, and the soap-suds were yet smoking which she off her arms. But for this, she might have been a child, playing at washing, itating a poor working-woman with a quick observation of the truth.

had come running from some place in the neighbourhood, and had made haste she could. Consequently, though she was very light, she was out of , and could not speak at first, as she stood panting, and wiping her arms, oking quietly at us.

here's Charley!" said the boy.

child he was nursing, stretched forth its arms, and cried out to be taken by y. The little girl took it, in a womanly sort of manner belonging to the and the bonnet, and stood looking at us over the burden that clung to her ffectionately.

it possible," whispered my guardian, as we put a chair for the little creature, t her to sit down with her load: the boy keeping close to her, holding to ron, "that this child works for the rest? Look at this! For God's sake this!"

as a thing to look at. The three children close together, and two of them solely on the third, and the third so young and yet with an air of age and ess that sat so strangely on the childish figure.

arley, Charley!" said my guardian. "How old are you?"

er thirteen, sir," replied the child.

! What a great age," said my guardian. "What a great age, Charley!" not describe the tenderness with which he spoke to her; half playfully, yet more compassionately and mournfully.

nd do you live alone here with these babies, Charley?" said my guardian.

s, sir," returned the child, looking up into his face with perfect confidence, father died."

d how do you live, Charley? O! Charley," said my guardian, turning e away for a moment, "how do you live?"

nce father died, sir, I've gone out to work. I'm out washing to-day."

d help you, Charley!" said my guardian. "You're not tall enough to he tub!"

"In pattens I am, sir," she said quickly. "I've got a high pair as belon to mother."

"And when did mother die? Poor mother!"

"Mother died, just after Emma was born," said the child, glancing at the upon her bosom. "Then father said I was to be as good a mother to as I could. And so I tried. And so I worked at home, and did cleaning nursing and washing, for a long time before I began to go out. And that's I know how; don't you see, sir?"

"And do you often go out?"

"As often as I can," said Charley, opening her eyes, and smiling, "becaus earning sixpences and shillings!"

"And do you always lock the babies up when you go out?"

"To keep 'em safe, sir, don't you see?" said Charley. "Mrs. Blinder comes now and then, and Mr. Gridley comes up sometimes, and perhaps I can ru sometimes, and they can play you know, and Tom an't afraid of being locked are you, Tom?"

"No-o!" said Tom, stoutly.

"When it comes on dark, the lamps are lighted down in the court, and t show up here quite bright—almost quite bright. Don't they, Tom?"

"Yes, Charley," said Tom, "almost quite bright."

"Then he's as good as gold," said the little creature—O! in such a moth womanly way! "And when Emma's tired, he puts her to bed. And when tired he goes to bed himself. And when I come home and light the candle, has a bit of supper, he sits up again and has it with me. Don't you, Tom?"

"O yes, Charley!" said Tom. "That I do!" And either in this glimp the great pleasure of his life, or in gratitude and love for Charley, who was a all to him, he laid his face among the scanty folds of her frock, and passed laughing into crying.

It was the first time since our entry, that a tear had been shed among t children. The little orphan girl had spoken of their father, and their mothe if all that sorrow were subdued by the necessity of taking courage, and by childish importance in being able to work, and by her bustling busy way. now, when Tom cried: although she sat quite tranquil, looking quietly a and did not by any movement disturb a hair of the head of either of her charges: I saw two silent tears fall down her face.

I stood at the window with Ada, pretending to look at the housetops, and blackened stack of chimneys, and the poor plants, and the birds in little c belonging to the neighbours, when I found that Mrs. Blinder, from the shop be had come in (perhaps it had taken her all this time to get up-stairs) and was ing to my guardian.

"It's not much to forgive 'em the rent, sir," she said: "who could ta from them!"

"Well, well!" said my guardian to us two. "It is enough that the time come when this good woman will find that it was much, and that forasmu she did it unto the least of these—! This child," he added, after a few mom "could she possibly continue this?"

"Really, sir, I think she might," said Mrs. Blinder, getting her heavy b by painful degrees. "She's as handy as it's possible to be. Bless you, sir way she tended them two children, after the mother died, was the talk o yard! And it was a wonder to see her with him after he was took ill, it r was! 'Mrs. Blinder,' he said to me the very last he spoke—he was lying the 'Mrs. Blinder, whatever my calling may have been, I see a Angel sitting in room last night along with my child, and I trust her to Our Father!'"

had no other calling?" said my guardian.
, sir," returned Mrs. Blinder, "he was nothing but a follower. When he me to lodge here, I didn't know what he was, and I confess that when I ut I gave him notice. It wasn't liked in the yard. It wasn't approved by ier lodgers. It is *not* a genteel calling," said Mrs. Blinder, "and most do object to it. Mr. Gridley objected to it, very strong; and he is a good though his temper has been hard tried."
you gave him notice?" said my guardian.
I gave him notice," said Mrs. Blinder. "But really when the time came, new no other ill of him, I was in doubts. He was punctual and diligent; what he had to do, sir," said Mrs. Blinder, unconsciously fixing Mr. Skim- ith her eye; "and it's something in this world, even to do that."
you kept him after all?"
hy, I said that if he could arrange with Mr. Gridley, I could arrange it e other lodgers, and should not so much mind its being liked or disliked in d. Mr. Gridley gave his consent gruff—but gave it. He was always gruff m, but he has been kind to the children since. A person is never known erson is proved."
ve many people been kind to the children?" asked Mr. Jarndyce.
on the whole, not so bad, sir," said Mrs. Blinder; "but, certainly not so s would have been, if their father's calling had been different. Mr. Coavins guinea, and the follerers made up a little purse. Some neighbours in the hat had always joked and tapped their shoulders when he went by, came l with a little subscription, and—in general—not so bad. Similarly with Char- Some people won't employ her, because she was a follerer's child; some that do employ her, cast it at her; some make a merit of having her to r them, with that and all her drawbacks upon her: and perhaps pay her d put upon her more. But she's patienter than others would be, and is oo, and always willing, up to the full mark of her strength and over. So d say, in general, not so bad, sir, but might be better."
Blinder sat down to give herself a more favourable opportunity of recovering ath, exhausted anew by so much talking before it was fully restored. Mr. ce was turning to speak to us, when his attention was attracted, by the entrance into the room of the Mr. Gridley who had been mentioned, and we had seen on our way up.
lon't know what you may be doing here, ladies and gentlemen," he said, as sented our presence, "but you'll excuse my coming in. I don't come in about me. Well, Charley! Well, Tom! Well, little one! How is it all to-day?"
ent over the group, in a caressing way, and clearly was regarded as a friend children, though his face retained its stern character, and his manner to us rude as it could be. My guardian noticed it, and respected it.
one, surely, would come here to stare about him," he said mildly.
ay be so, sir, may be so," returned the other, taking Tom upon his knee, iving him off impatiently. "I don't want to argue with ladies and gentle- I have had enough of arguing, to last one man his life."
u have sufficient reason, I dare say," said Mr. Jarndyce, "for being chafed itated——"
ere again!" exclaimed the man, becoming violently angry. "I am of a some temper. I am irascible. I am not polite!"
t very, I think."
," said Gridley, putting down the child, and going up to him as if he to strike him. "Do you know anything of Courts of Equity?"

"Perhaps I do, to my sorrow."

"To your sorrow?" said the man, pausing in his wrath. "If so, I beg pardon. I am not polite, I know. I beg your pardon! Sir," with rene violence, "I have been dragged for five-and-twenty years over burning iron, a have lost the habit of treading upon velvet. Go into the Court of Chan yonder, and ask what is one of the standing jokes that brighten up their busi sometimes, and they will tell you that the best joke they have, is the man f Shropshire. I," he said, beating one hand on the other, passionately, "am man from Shropshire."

"I believe, I and my family have also had the honour of furnishing some e tainment in the same grave place," said my guardian, composedly. "You have heard my name—Jarndyce."

"Mr. Jarndyce," said Gridley, with a rough sort of salutation, "you bear wrongs more quietly than I can bear mine. More than that, I tell you—and t this gentleman, and these young ladies, if they are friends of yours—that if I my wrongs in any other way, I should be driven mad! It is only by reser them, and by revenging them in my mind, and by angrily demanding the just never get, that I am able to keep my wits together. It is only that!" he speaking in a homely, rustic way, and with great vehemence. "You may tel that I over-excite myself. I answer that it's in my nature to do it, under wr and I must do it. There's nothing between doing it, and sinking into the sm state of the poor little mad woman that haunts the Court. If I was once t down under it, I should become imbecile."

The passion and heat in which he was, and the manner in which his face wo and the violent gestures with which he accompanied what he said, were painful to see.

"Mr. Jarndyce," he said, "consider my case. As true as there is a He above us, this is my case. I am one of two brothers. My father (a farmer) a will, and left his farm and stock, and so forth, to my mother, for her life. my mother's death, all was to come to me, except a legacy of three hun pounds that I was then to pay my brother. My mother died. My brother, time afterwards, claimed his legacy. I, and some of my relations, said that he had a part of it already, in board and lodging, and some other things. mind! That was the question, and nothing else. No one disputed the will one disputed anything but whether part of that three hundred pounds had already paid or not. To settle that question, my brother filing a bill, I was ob to go into this accursed Chancery; I was forced there, because the law force and would let me go nowhere else. Seventeen people were made defendan that simple suit! It first came on, after two years. It was then stopped another two years, while the Master may his head rot off! inquired whether I my father's son—about which, there was no dispute at all with any mortal crea He then found out, that there were not defendants enough—remember, there only seventeen as yet!—but, that we must have another who had been left and must begin all over again. The costs at that time—before the thing began!—were three times the legacy. My brother would have given up legacy, and joyful, to escape more costs. My whole estate, left to me in will of my father's, has gone in costs. The suit, still undecided, has fallen rack, and ruin, and despair, with everything else—and here I stand, this Now, Mr. Jarndyce, in your suit there are thousands and thousands involved w in mine there are hundreds. Is mine less hard to bear, or is it harder to b when my whole living was in it, and has been thus shamefully sucked away?"

Mr. Jarndyce said that he condoled with him with all his heart, and tha setup no monopoly, himself, in being unjustly treated by this monstrous syst

here again!" said Mr. Gridley, with no diminution of his rage. "The
n! I am told, on all hands, it's the system. I mustn't look to individuals.
ie system. I mustn't go into Court, and say, 'My Lord, I beg to know this
you—is this right or wrong? Have you the face to tell me I have received
e, and therefore am dismissed?' My Lord knows nothing of it. He sits
, to administer the system. I mustn't go to Mr. Tulkinghorn, the solicitor in
ln's Inn Fields, and say to him when he makes me furious, by being so cool
atisfied—as they all do; for I know they gain by it while I lose, don't I?—I
't say to him, I will have something out of some one for my ruin, by fair
s or foul! *He* is not responsible. It's the system. But, if I do no violence
y of them, here—I may! I don't know what may happen if I am carried
id myself at last!—I will accuse the individual workers of that system
st me, face to face, before the great eternal bar!"
passion was fearful. I could not have believed in such rage without see-

have done!" he said, sitting down and wiping his face. "Mr. Jarndyce, I
done! I am violent, I know. I ought to know it. I have been in prison
ntempt of Court. I have been in prison for threatening the solicitor. I
been in this trouble, and that trouble, and shall be again. I am the man from
shire, and I sometimes go beyond amusing them—though they have found it
ng, too, to see me committed into custody, and brought up in custody, and all
It would be better for me, they tell me, if I restrained myself. I tell them,
f I did restrain myself, I should become imbecile. I was a good-enough-
ered man once, I believe. People in my part of the country, say, they
nber me so; but, now, I must have this vent under my sense of injury, or
ng could hold my wits together. 'It would be far better for you, Mr. Gridley,'
ord Chancellor told me last week, 'not to waste your time here, and to stay,
ly employed, down in Shropshire.' 'My Lord, my Lord, I know it would,'
to him, 'and it would have been far better for me never to have heard the
of your high office; but, unhappily for me, I can't undo the past, and the
lrives me here!'—Besides," he added, breaking fiercely out, "I'll shame
To the last, I'll show myself in that Court to its shame. If I knew when
going to die, and could be carried there, and had a voice to speak with, I
die there, saying, 'You have brought me here, and sent me from here,
and many a time. Now send me out, feet foremost!'"
countenance had, perhaps for years, become so set in its contentious expres-
hat it did not soften, even now when he was quiet.
came to take these babies down to my room for an hour," he said, going to
again, "and let them play about. I didn't mean to say all this, but it don't
signify. You're not afraid of me, Tom; are you?"
'o!" said Tom. "You ain't angry with *me*."
ou are right, my child. You're going back, Charley? Aye? Come then,
me!" He took the youngest child on his arm, where she was willing enough
carried. "I shouldn't wonder if we found a ginger-bread soldier down-
Let's go and look for him!"
made his former rough salutation, which was not deficient in a certain
t, to Mr. Jarndyce; and bowing slightly to us, went down-stairs to his room.
on that, Mr. Skimpole began to talk, for the first time since our arrival, in
ual gay strain. He said, Well, it was really very pleasant to see how things
adapted themselves to purposes. Here was this Mr. Gridley, a man of a
will, and surprising energy—intellectually speaking, a sort of inharmonious
smith—and he could easily imagine that there Gridley was, years ago, wan-
about in life for *something to expend* his superfluous combativeness upon—

a sort of Young Love among the thorns—when the Court of Chancery came his way, and accommodated him with the exact thing he wanted. There th were, matched, ever afterwards! Otherwise he might have been a great gene blowing up all sorts of towns, or he might have been a great politician, dealing all sorts of parliamentary rhetoric; but, as it was, he and the Court of Chanc had fallen upon each other in the pleasantest way, and nobody was much worse, and Gridley was, so to speak, from that hour provided for. Then lool Coavinses! How delightfully poor Coavinses (father of these charming childr illustrated the same principle! He, Mr. Skimpole, himself, had sometimes repi at the existence of Coavinses. He had found Coavinses in his way. He co have dispensed with Coavinses. There had been times when, if he had bee Sultan, and his Grand Vizier had said one morning, "What does the Comman of the Faithful require at the hands of his slave?" he might have even g so far as to reply, "The head of Coavinses!" But what turned out to be case? That, all that time, he had been giving employment to a most deserv man; that he had been a benefactor to Coavinses; that he had actually b enabling Coavinses to bring up these charming children in this agreeable w developing these social virtues! Insomuch that his heart had just now swell and the tears had come into his eyes, when he had looked round the room, thought, "I was the great patron of Coavinses, and his little comforts were work!"

There was something so captivating in his light way of touching these fanta strings, and he was such a mirthful child by the side of the graver childhood had seen, that he made my guardian smile even as he turned towards us fro little private talk with Mrs. Blinder. We kissed Charley, and took her do stairs with us, and stopped outside the house to see her run away to her work. don't know where she was going, but we saw her run, such a little, little creat in her womanly bonnet and apron, through a coveted way at the bottom of part; and melt into the city's strife and sound, like a dewdrop in an ocean.

CHAPTER XVI.

TOM-ALL-ALONE'S.

My Lady Dedlock is restless, very restless. The astonished fashionable int gence hardly knows where to have her. To-day, she is at Chesney Wold; yes day she was at her house in town; to-morrow, she may be on road, for anyth the fashionable intelligence can with confidence predict. Even Sir Leicest gallantry has some trouble to keep pace with her. It would have more, but t his other faithful ally, for better and for worse—the gout—darts into the old bed-chamber at Chesney Wold, and grips him by both legs.

Sir Leicester receives the gout as a troublesome demon, but still a demon the patrician order. All the Dedlocks, in the direct male line, through a cours time during and beyond which the memory of man goeth not to the contrary, h had the gout. It can be proved, sir. Other men's fathers may have died of rheumatism, or may have taken base contagion from the tainted blood of the s vulgar, but the Dedlock family have communicated something exclusive, even the levelling process of dying, by dying of their own family gout. It has come dow through the illustrious line, like the plate, or the pictures, or the place in Linco shire. It is among their dignities. Sir Leicester is, perhaps, not wholly with

[redacted]

pression, though he has never resolved it into words, that the angel of death discharge of his necessary duties may observe to the shades of the aristo- "My lords and gentlemen, I have the honour to present to you another :k certified to have arrived per the family gout."

ce, Sir Leicester yields up his family legs to the family disorder, as if he is name and fortune on that feudal tenure. He feels, that for a Dedlock aid upon his back and spasmodically twitched and stabbed in his extremi- a liberty taken somewhere; but, he thinks, "We have all yielded to this; ngs to us; it has, for some hundreds of years, been understood that we are make the vaults in the park interesting on more ignoble terms; and I myself to the compromise."

a goodly show he makes, lying in a flush of crimson and gold, in the midst great drawing-room, before his favourite picture of my Lady, with broad of sunlight shining in, down the long perspective, through the long line of rs, and alternating with soft reliefs of shadow. Outside, the stately oaks, for ages in the green ground which has never known ploughshare, but was Chase when kings rode to battle with sword and shield, and rode a-hunting ow and arrow; bear witness to his greatness. Inside, his forefathers, look- him from the walls, say, "Each of us was a passing reality here, and left loured shadow of himself, and melted into remembrance as dreamy as the voices of the rooks now lulling you to rest;" and bear their testimony to atness, too. And he is very great, this day. And woe to Boythorn, or laring wight, who shall presumptuously contest an inch with him!

Lady is at present represented, near Sir Leicester, by her portrait. She tted away to town, with no intention of remaining there, and will soon flit again, to the confusion of the fashionable intelligence. The house in town prepared for her reception. It is muffled and dreary. Only one Mercury der, gapes disconsolate at the hall-window; and he mentioned last night her Mercury of his acquaintance, also accustomed to good society, that if rt of thing was to last—which it couldn't, for a man of his spirits couldn't , and a man of his figure couldn't be expected to bear it—there would be no e for him, upon his honour, but to cut his throat!

at connexion can there be, between the place in Lincolnshire, the house in the Mercury in powder, and the whereabout of Jo the outlaw with the who had that distant ray of light upon him when he swept the churchyard- What connexion can there have been between many people in the innu- histories of this world, who, from opposite sides of great gulfs, have, eless, been very curiously brought together!

weeps his crossing all day long, unconscious of the link, if any link there le sums up his mental condition, when asked a question, by replying that on't know nothink." He knows that it's hard to keep the mud off the g in dirty weather, and harder still to live by doing it. Nobody taught him, at much; he found it out.

ve—that is to say, Jo has not yet died—in a ruinous place, known to the him by the name of Tom-all-Alone's. It is a black, dilapidated street, by all decent people, where the crazy houses were seized upon, when [illegible] their [illegible] tene- [illegible] wretch, [illegible] exis- hat [illegible] to sleep, got [illegible] fetching and g fever, and sowing more evil in its every footprint than Lord Coodle, and

Sir Thomas Doodle, and the Duke of Foodle, and all the fine gentlemen in offic down to Zoodle, shall set right in five hundred years—though born expressly do it.

Twice, lately, there has been a crash and a cloud of dust, like the springing a mine, in Tom-all-Alone's; and, each time, a house has fallen. These accide have made a paragraph in the newspapers, and have filled a bed or two in t nearest hospital. The gaps remain, and there are not unpopular lodgings amo the rubbish. As several more houses are nearly ready to go, the next crash Tom-all-alone's may be expected to be a good one.

This desirable property is in Chancery, of course. It would be an insult to t discernment of any man with half an eye, to tell him so. Whether "Tom" the popular representative of the original plaintiff or defendant in Jarndyce a Jarndyce: or, whether Tom lived here when the suit had laid the street waste, alone, until other settlers came to join him; or, whether the traditional title i comprehensive name for a retreat cut off from honest company and put out of t pale of hope; perhaps nobody knows. Certainly, Jo don't know.

"For *I* don't," says Jo, "*I* don't know nothink."

It must be a strange state to be like Jo! To shuffle through the streets, un miliar with the shapes, and in utter darkness as to the meaning, of those myste ous symbols, so abundant over the shops, and at the corners of streets, and on t doors, and in the windows! To see people read, and to see people write, and see the postmen deliver letters, and not to have the least idea of all that langua —to be, to every scrap of it, stone blind and dumb! It must be very puzzling see the good company going to the churches on Sundays, with their books in th hands, and to think (or perhaps Jo *does* think, at odd times) what does it mean, and if it means anything to anybody, how comes it that it means nothing me? To be hustled, and jostled, and moved on; and really to feel that it wou appear to be perfectly true that I have no business, here, or there, or anywher and yet to be perplexed by the consideration that I *am* here somehow, too, a everybody overlooked me until I became the creature that I am! It must be strange state, not merely to be told that I am scarcely human (as in the case of offering myself for a witness), but to feel it of my own knowledge all my lif To see the horses, dogs, and cattle, go by me, and to know that in ignorance belong to them, and not to the superior beings in my shape, whose delicacy offend! Jo's ideas of a Criminal Trial, or a Judge, or a Bishop, or a Governme or that inestimable jewel to him (if he only knew it) the Constitution, should strange! His whole material and immaterial life is wonderfully strange; i death, the strangest thing of all.

Jo comes out of Tom-all-Alone's, meeting the tardy morning which is alw late in getting down there, and munches his dirty bit of bread as he comes alon His way lying through many streets, and the houses not yet being open, he down to breakfast on the door-step of the Society for the Propagation of the G pel in Foreign Parts, and gives it a brush when he has finished, as an acknowled ment of the accommodation. He admires the size of the edifice, and wonde what it's all about. He has no idea, poor wretch, of the spiritual destitution of coral reef in the Pacific, or what it costs to look up the precious souls among t cocoa-nuts and bread-fruit.

He goes to his crossing, and begins to lay it out for the day. The town awake the great tee-totum is set up for its daily spin and whirl; all that unaccountab reading and writing, which has been suspended for a few hours, recommence Jo, and the other lower animals, get on in the unintelligible mess as they can. is market-day. The blinded oxen, over-goaded, over-driven, never guided, ru into wrong places and are beaten out; and plunge, red-eyed and foaming, at ston

and often sorely hurt the innocent, and often sorely hurt themselves. Very
and his order; very, very like!
ınd of music comes and plays. Jo listens to it. So does a dog—a drover's
aiting for his master outside a butcher's shop, and evidently thinking about
heep he has had upon his mind for some hours, and is happily rid of. He
perplexed respecting three or four; can't remember where he left them;
up and down the street, as half expecting to see them astray; suddenly
up his ears and remembers all about it. A thoroughly vagabond dog,
›med to low company and public-houses; a terrific dog to sheep; ready at
le to scamper over their backs, and tear out mouthfuls of their wool; but
cated, improved, developed dog, who has been taught his duties and knows
› discharge them. He and Jo listen to the music, probably with much the
mount of animal satisfaction; likewise, as to awakened association, aspira-
regret, melancholy or joyful reference to things beyond the senses, they
›bably upon a par. But, otherwise, how far above the human listener is the

ı that dog's descendants wild, like Jo, and in a very few years they will so
rate that they will lose even their bark—but not their bite.
day changes as it wears itself away, and becomes dark and drizzly. Jo
t out, at his crossing, among the mud and wheels, the horses, whips, and
las, and gets but a scanty sum to pay for the unsavoury shelter of Tom-all-
s. Twilight comes on; gas begins to start up in the shops; the lamplighter,
s ladder, runs along the margin of the pavement. A wretched evening is
ing to close in.
is chambers, Mr. Tulkinghorn sits meditating an application to the nearest
rate to-morrow morning for a warrant. Gridley, a disappointed suitor, has
ere to-day, and has been alarming. We are not to be put in bodily fear,
ıt ill-conditioned fellow shall be held to bail again. From the ceiling, fore-
ıed Allegory, in the person of one impossible Roman upside down, points
e arm of Samson (out of joint, and an odd one) obtrusively toward the win-
Why should Mr. Tulkinghorn, for such no reason, look out of window?
ıand not always pointing there? So he does not look out of window.
if he did, what would it be to see a woman going by? There are women
ı in the world, Mr. Tulkinghorn thinks—too many; they are at the bottom
ıat goes wrong in it, though, for the matter of that, they create business for
ı. What would it be to see a woman going by, even though she were
ecretly? They are all secret. Mr. Tulkinghorn knows that, very well.
they are not all like the woman who now leaves him and his house behind;
n whose plain dress, and her refined manner, there is something exceed-
ıconsistent. She should be an upper servant by her attire, yet, in her air
p, though both are hurried and assumed—as far as she can assume in the
streets, which she treads with an unaccustomed foot—she is a lady. Her
veiled, and still she sufficiently betrays herself to make more than one of
:ho pass her look round sharply.
never turns her head. Lady or servant, she has a purpose in her, and can
it. She never turns her head, until she comes to the crossing where Jo
ith his broom. He crosses with her, and begs. Still, she does not turn
d until she has landed on the other side. Then, she slightly beckons to
ıd says "Come here!"
llows her, a pace or two, into a quiet court.
e you the boy I've read of in the papers?" she asked behind her veil.
on't know," says Jo, staring moodily at the veil, "nothink about no papers.
know nothink *about nothink at all.*"

"Were you examined at an Inquest?"

"I don't know nothink about no—where I was took by the beadle, do mean?" says Jo. "Was the boy's name at the Inkwhich, Jo?"

"Yes."

"That's me!" says Jo.

"Come farther up."

"You mean about the man?" says Jo, following. "Him as wos dead?"

"Hush! Speak in a whisper! Yes. Did he look, when he was living, so ill and poor?"

"O jist!" says Jo.

"Did he look like—not like *you*?" says the woman with abhorrence.

"O not so bad as me," says Jo. "I'm a reg'lar one *I* am! You didn't k him, did you?"

"How dare you ask me if I knew him?"

"No offence, my lady," says Jo, with much humility; for even he has g the suspicion of her being a lady.

"I am not a lady. I am a servant."

"You are a jolly servant!" says Jo; without the least idea of saying anyt offensive; merely as a tribute of admiration.

"Listen and be silent. Don't talk to me, and stand farther from me! Can show me all those places that were spoken of in the account I read? The p he wrote for, the place he died at, the place where you were taken to, and place where he was buried? Do you know the place where he was buried?"

Jo answers with a nod; having also nodded as each other place was mentio

"Go before me, and show me all those dreadful places. Stop opposit each, and don't speak to me unless I speak to you. Don't look back. Do I want, and I will pay you well."

Jo attends closely while the words are being spoken; tells them off o broom-handle, finding them rather hard; pauses to consider their meaning; siders it satisfactory, and nods his ragged head.

"I'm fly," says Jo. "But fen larks, you know. Stow hooking it!"

"What does the horrible creature mean?" exclaims the servant, recoiling him,

"Stow cutting away you know!" says Jo.

"I don't understand you. Go on before! I will give you more money you ever had in your life."

Jo screws up his mouth into a whistle, gives his ragged head a rub, take broom under his arm, and leads the way; passing deftly, with his bare feet, the hard stones, and through the mud and mire.

Cook's Court. Jo stops. A pause.

"Who lives here?"

"Him wot give him his writing, and give me half a bull," says Jo, in a whi without looking over his shoulder.

"Go on to the next."

Krook's house. Jo stops again. A longer pause.

"Who lives here?"

"*He* lived here," Jo answers as before.

After a silence he is asked "In which room?"

"In the back room up there. You can see the winder from this corner. there! That's where I see him stritched out. This is the public ouse wh was took to."

"Go on to the next!"

It is a *longer* walk to the next; but, Jo, relieved of his first suspicions, stic

ns imposed upon him, and does not look round. By many devious ways, ; with offence of many kinds, they come to the little tunnel of a court, and gas-lamp (lighted now), and to the iron gate.

: was put there," says Jo, holding to the bars and looking in.

here? O, what a scene of horror!"

ıere!" says Jo, pointing. "Over yinder. Among them piles of bones, se to that there kitchin winder! They put him wery nigh the top. They liged to stamp upon it to git it in. I could unkiver it for you with my , if the gate was open. That's why they locks it, I s'pose," giving it a "It's always locked. Look at the rat!" cries Jo, excited. "Hi! Look! he goes! Ho! Into the ground!"

servant shrinks into a corner—into a corner of that hideous archway, with dly stains contaminating her dress; and putting out her two hands, and iately telling him to keep away from her, for he is loathsome to her, so s for some moments. Jo stands staring, and is still staring when she s herself.

this place of abomination, consecrated ground?"

lon't know nothink of consequential ground." says Jo, still staring.

it blessed?"

HICH?" says Jo, in the last degree amazed.

it blessed'"

n blest if I know," says Jo, staring more than ever; "but I shouldn't think i't. Blest?" repeats Jo, something troubled in his mind. "It an't done h good if it is. Blest? I should think it was t'othered myself. But I don't nothink!"

servant takes as little heed of what he says, as she seems to take of what s said herself. She draws off her glove, to get some money from her purse. ntly notices how white and small her hand is, and what a jolly servant she e to wear such sparkling rings.

drops a piece of money in his hand, without touching it, and shuddering as ands approach. "Now," she adds, "show me the spot again!"

thrusts the handle of his broom between the bars of the gate, and, with his ; power of elaboration, points it out. At length, looking aside to see if he ıde himself intelligible, he finds that he is alone.

first proceeding, is, to hold the piece of money to the gas-light, and to be wered at finding that it is yellow—gold. His next, is, to give it a one-sided the edge, as a test of its quality. His next, to put it in his mouth for safety, sweep the step and passage with great care. His job done, he sets off for ll-Alone's; stopping in the light of innumerable gas-lamps to produce the f gold, and give it another one-sided bite, as a re-assurance of its being e.

Mercury in powder is in no want of society to-night, for my Lady goes to a dinner, and three or four balls. Sir Leicester is fidgety, down at Chesney with no better company than the gout; he complains to Mrs. Rouncewell e rain makes such a monotonous pattering on the terrace, that he can't read ber, even by the fireside in his own snug dressing-room.

Leicester would have done better to try the other side of the house, my says Mrs. Rouncewell to Rosa. "His dressing-room is on my Lady's side. all these years I never heard the step upon the Ghost's Walk, more distinct is to-night!"

CHAPTER XVII.

ESTHER'S NARRATIVE.

RICHARD very often came to see us while we remained in London (th soon failed in his letter-writing), and with his quick abilities, his good spirits, l temper, his gaiety and freshness, was always delightful. But, though I lil more and more, the better I knew him, I still felt more and more, how was to be regretted that he had been educated in no habits of applicat concentration. The system which had addressed him in exactly the same as it had addressed hundreds of other boys, all varying in character and c had enabled him to dash through his tasks, always with fair credit, and oft distinction; but in a fitful, dazzling way that had confirmed his reliance c very qualities in himself, which it had been most desirable to direct an They were good qualities, without which no high place can be meritorious but, like fire and water, though excellent servants, they were very bad mas they had been under Richard's direction, they would have been his frien Richard being under their direction, they became his enemies.

I write down these opinions, not because I believe that this or any other th so, because I thought so; but only because I did think so, and I want to l candid about all I thought and did. These were my thoughts about Rich thought I often observed besides, how right my guardian was in what he h and that the uncertainties and delays of the Chancery suit had imparte nature something of the careless spirit of a gamester, who felt that he was a great gaming system.

Mr. and Mrs. Bayham Badger coming one afternoon, when my guard not at home, in the course of conversation I naturally inquired after Richa

"Why, Mr. Carstone," said Mrs. Badger, "is very well, and is, I assu a great acquisition to our society. Captain Swosser used to say of me tha always better than land a-head and a breeze a-starn to the midshipmen when the purser's junk had become as tough as the fore-topsel weather It was his naval way of mentioning generally that I was an acquisition society. I may render the same tribute, I am sure, to Mr. Carstone. I you won't think me premature if I mention it?"

I said no, as Mrs. Badger's insinuating tone seemed to require such an

"Nor Miss Clare?" said Mrs. Bayham Badger, sweetly.

Ada said no, too, and looked uneasy.

"Why, you see, my dears," said Mrs. Badger—"you'll excuse me call my dears?"

We entreated Mrs. Badger not to mention it.

"Because you really are, if I may take the liberty of saying so," pursu Badger, "so perfectly charming. You see, my dears, that although I young—or Mr. Bayham Badger pays me the compliment of saying so—"

"No," Mr. Badger called out, like some one contradicting at a public m "Not at all!"

"Very well," smiled Mrs. Badger, "we will say still young."

("Undoubtedly," said Mr. Badger.)

"My dears, though still young, I have had many opportunities of ol young men. There were many such on board the dear old Crippler, I assu After that, when I was with Captain Swosser in the Mediterranean, I en *every opportunity of* knowing and befriending the midshipmen under

nand. *You* never heard them called the young gentlemen, my
ably would not understand allusions to their pipe-claying their
; but it is otherwise with me, for blue water has been a second
I I have been quite a sailor. Again, with Professor Dingo."
European reputation," murmured Mr. Badger.)
t my dear first, and became the wife of my dear second," said
eaking of her former husbands as if they were parts of a charade,
opportunities of observing youth. The class attendant on Pro-
ctures was a large one, and it became my pride, as the wife of an
c man seeking herself in science the utmost consolation it could
our house open to the students, as a kind of Scientific Exchange.
evening there was lemonade and a mixed biscuit, for all who
of those refreshments. And there was science to an unlimited

e assemblies those, Miss Summerson," said Mr. Badger, reve-
ere must have been great intellectual friction going on there, under
uch a man!")
pursued Mrs. Badger, "now that I am the wife of my dear third,
ill pursue those habits of observation which were formed during
Captain Swosser, and adapted to new and unexpected purposes
ne of Professor Dingo. I therefore have not come to the con-
r. Carstone as a Neophyte. And yet I am very much of the
rs, that he has not chosen his profession advisedly."
o very anxious now, that I asked Mrs. Badger on what she founded
:
ss Summerson," she replied, "on Mr. Carstone's character and
s of such a very easy disposition, that probably he would never
vhile to mention how he really feels; but, he feels languid about
He has not that positive interest in it which makes it his vocation.
cided impression in reference to it, I should say it was that it is a
. Now, this is not promising. Young men, like Mr. Allan Wood-
it from a strong interest in all that it can do, will find some reward
reat deal of work for a very little money, and through years of
lurance and disappointment. But I am quite convinced that this
he case with Mr. Carstone."
adger think so too?" asked Ada, timidly.
Mr. Badger, "to tell the truth, Miss Clare, this view of the
ccurred to me until Mrs. Badger mentioned it. But, when Mrs.
n that light, I naturally gave great consideration to it; knowing
r's mind, in addition to its natural advantages, has had the rare
ing formed by two such very distinguished (I will even say illus-
n as Captain Swosser of the Royal Navy and Professor Dingo.
at which I have arrived is—in short, is Mrs. Badger's con-

xim of Captain Swosser's," said Mrs. Badger, "speaking in his
manner, that when you make pitch hot, you cannot make it too
you only have to swab a plank, you should swab it as if Davy
you. It appears to me that this maxim is applicable to the
as to the nautical profession."
sions," observed Mr. Badger, "It was admirably said by Captain
tifully said."
cted to Professor Dingo, when we were staying in the North of
r marriage," *said Mrs.* Badger, "that he disfigured some of the

I was not by any means so sure of that; and I saw how his hankering af vague things yet to come of those long-deferred hopes, cast a shade on face. But I thought it best to encourage him in any project of continuous en and only advised him to be quite sure that his mind was made up now.

"My dear Minerva," said Richard, "I am as steady as you are. I a mistake; we are all liable to mistakes; I won't do so any more, and I'll b such a lawyer as is not often seen. That is, you know," said Richard, rel into doubt, "if it really is worth while, after all, to make such a disturbance nothing particular!"

This led to our saying again, with a great deal of gravity, all that we h already, and to our coming to much the same conclusion afterwards. But, strongly advised Richard to be frank and open with Mr. Jarndyce, wit moment's delay; and his disposition was naturally so opposed to conceal that he sought him out at once (taking us with him), and made a full a "Rick," said my guardian, after hearing him attentively, "we can retrea honour, and we will. But we must be careful—for our cousin's sake, Ri our cousin's sake—that we make no more such mistakes. Therefore, in the of the law, we will have a good trial before we decide. We will look bef leap, and take plenty of time about it."

Richard's energy was of such an impatient and fitful kind, that he woul liked nothing better than to have gone to Mr. Kenge's office in that hour, have entered into articles with him on the spot. Submitting, however, good grace to the caution that we had shown to be so necessary, he co himself with sitting down among us in his lightest spirits, and talking as if unvarying purpose in life from childhood had been that one which no possession of him. My guardian was very kind and cordial with him, bu grave; enough so to cause Ada, when he had departed and we were go stairs to bed, to say:

"Cousin John, I hope you don't think the worse of Richard?"

"No, my love," said he.

"Because it was very natural that Richard should be mistaken in such a case. It is not uncommon."

"No, no, my love," said he. "Don't look unhappy."

"O, I am not unhappy, cousin John!" said Ada, smiling cheerfully, w hand upon his shoulder, where she had put it in bidding him good night. should be a little so, if you thought at all the worse of Richard."

"My dear," said Mr. Jarndyce. "I should think the worse of him you were ever in the least unhappy through his means. I should b disposed to quarrel with myself, even then, than with poor Rick, for I l you together. But, tut, all this is nothing! He has time before him, a race to run. *I* think the worse of him? Not I, my loving cousin! And I swear!"

"No, indeed, cousin John," said Ada, "I am sure I could not—I am would not—think any ill of Richard, if the whole world did. I could, would, think better of him then, than at any other time!"

So quietly and honestly she said it, with her hands upon his shoulder hands now—and looking up into his face, like the picture of Truth!

I think," said my guardian, thoughtfully regarding her, "I think it n somewhere written that the virtues of the mothers shall, occasionally, be vis the children, as well as the sins of the fathers. Good night, my rosebud. night, little woman. Pleasant slumbers! Happy dreams!"

This was the first time I ever saw him follow Ada with his eyes, with son of a shadow on their benevolent expression. I well remembered the lo

ie had contemplated her and Richard, when she was singing in the
t; it was but a very little while since he had watched them passing
he room in which the sun was shining, and away into the shade; but
ce was changed, and even the silent look of confidence in me which now
l it once more, was not quite so hopeful and untroubled as it had originally

praised Richard more to me, that night, than ever she had praised him
he went to sleep with a little bracelet he had given her clasped upon her
fancied she was dreaming of him when I kissed her cheek after she had
hour, and saw how tranquil and happy she looked.
was so little inclined to sleep, myself, that night, that I sat up working.
d not be worth mentioning for its own sake, but I was wakeful and rather
rited. I don't know why. At least I don't think I know why. At least,
I do, but I don't think it matters.
ay rate, I made up my mind to be so dreadfully industrious that I would
myself not a moment's leisure to be low-spirited. For I naturally said,
r! You to be low-spirited. *You!*" And it really was time to say so,
es, I really did see myself in the glass, almost crying. "As if you had
g to make you unhappy, instead of everything to make you happy, you
ful heart!" said I.
ould have made myself go to sleep, I would have done it directly; but, not
ible to do that, I took out of my basket some ornamental work for our
I mean Bleak House) that I was busy with at that time, and sat down to
great determination. It was necessary to count all the stitches in that
nd I resolved to go on with it until I couldn't keep my eyes open, and
go to bed.
n found myself very busy. But I had left some silk down-stairs in a work-
awer in the temporary Growlery; and coming to a stop for want of it, I
candle and went softly down to get it. To my great surprise, on going
nd my guardian still there, and sitting looking at the ashes. He was lost
ght, his book lay unheeded by his side, his silvered iron-grey hair was
d confusedly upon his forehead as though his hand had been wandering
it while his thoughts were elsewhere, and his face looked worn. Almost
ed by coming upon him so unexpectedly, I stood still for a moment; and
have retired without speaking, had he not, in again passing his hand
tedly through his hair, seen me and started.
ther!"
d him what I had come for.
work so late, my dear?"
m working late to-night," said I, "because I couldn't sleep, and wished
myself. But, dear Guardian, you are late too, and look weary. You have
ible, I hope, to keep you waking?"
me, little woman, that *you* would readily understand," said he.
spoke in a regretful tone so new to me, that I inwardly repeated, as if that
help me to his meaning, "That *I* could readily understand!"
main a moment, Esther," said he. "You were in my thoughts."
hope I was not the trouble, Guardian?"
slightly waved his hand, and fell into his usual manner. The change was
arkable, and he appeared to make it by dint of so much self-command, that
I myself again inwardly repeating, "None that *I* could understand!"
ttle woman," said my guardian, "I was thinking—that is, I have been
g since I have been sitting here—that you ought to know, of your own
, all I know. *It is very little.* Next to nothing."

"Dear Guardian," I replied, "when you spoke to me before on
ject——"

"But since then," he gravely interposed, anticipating what I meant t
have reflected that your having anything to ask me, and my having a
tell you, are different considerations, Esther. It is perhaps my duty to
you the little I know."

"If you think so, Guardian, it is right."

"I think so," he returned, very gently, and kindly, and very distinct
dear, I think so now. If any real disadvantage can attach to your posit
mind of any man or woman worth a thought, it is right that you, at l
the world should not magnify it to yourself, by having vague impressi
nature."

I sat down; and said, after a little effort to be as calm as I ought to be,
my earliest remembrances, Guardian, is of these words: 'Your mothe
is your disgrace, and you were hers. The time will come, and soon enou
you will understand this better, and will feel it too, as no one save a wom
I had covered my face with my hands, in repeating the words; but I t
away now with a better kind of shame, I hope, and told him, that to hi
the blessing that I had from my childhood to that hour never, never, ne
He put up his hand as if to stop me. I well knew that he was ne
thanked, and said no more.

"Nine years, my dear," he said, after thinking for a little while, "ha
since I received a letter from a lady living in seclusion, written wit
passion and power that rendered it unlike all other letters I have ever
was written to me (as it told me in so many words), perhaps, because i
writer's idiosyncrasy to put that trust in me: perhaps, because it wa
justify it. It told me of a child, an orphan girl then twelve years old
such cruel words as those which live in your remembrance. It told m
writer had bred her in secrecy from her birth, had blotted out all tra
existence, and that if the writer were to die before the child became
she would be left entirely friendless, nameless, and unknown. It ask
consider if I would, in that case, finish what the writer had begun?"

I listened in silence, and looked attentively at him.

"Your early recollection, my dear, will supply the gloomy mediun
which all this was seen and expressed by the writer, and the distorte
which clouded her mind with impressions of the need there was for th
expiate an offence of which she was quite innocent. I felt concerne
little creature, in her darkened life; and replied to the letter."

I took his hand and kissed it.

"It laid the injunction on me that I should never propose to see the w
had long been estranged from all intercourse with the world, but who
a confidential agent if I would appoint one. I accredited Mr. Kenge.
said, of her own accord, and not of his seeking, that her name was an
one. That she was, if there were any ties of blood in such a case, the chi
That more than this she would never (and he was well persuaded of the
ness of her resolution), for any human consideration, disclose. My de
told you all."

I held his hand for a little while in mine.

"I saw my ward oftener than she saw me," he added, cheerily makin
it, "and I always knew she was beloved, useful, and happy. She r
twenty-thousand-fold, and twenty more to that, every hour in every day!

"And oftener still," said I, "she blesses the Guardian who is a Fathe
At the word Father, I saw his former trouble come into his face. He

as before, and it was gone in an instant; but, it had been there, and it had come o swiftly upon my words that I felt as if they had given him a shock. I again nwardly repeated, wondering, "That *I* could readily understand. None that *I* ould readily understand!" No, it was true. I did not understand it. Not for nany and many a day.

"Take a fatherly good night, my dear," said he, kissing me on the forehead, and so to rest. These are late hours for working and thinking. You do that or all of us, all day long, little housekeeper!"

I neither worked nor thought, any more, that night. I opened my grateful eart to Heaven in thankfulness for its Providence to me and its care of me, and ell asleep.

We had a visitor next day. Mr. Allan Woodcourt came. He came to take eave of us; he had settled to do so beforehand. He was going to China, and to ndia, as a surgeon on board ship. He was to be away a long, long time.

I believe—at least I know—that he was not rich. All his widowed mother could pare had been spent in qualifying him for his profession. It was not lucrative to young practitioner, with very little influence in London; and although he was, ight and day, at the service of numbers of poor people, and did wonders of gen- leness and skill for them, he gained very little by it in money. He was seven years lder than I. Not that I need mention it, for it hardly seems to belong to anything.

I think—I mean, he told us—that he had been in practice three or four years, nd that if he could have hoped to contend through three or four more, he would ot have made the voyage on which he was bound. But he had no fortune or rivate means, and so he was going away. He had been to see us several times together. We thought it a pity he should go away. Because he was distin- ished in his art among those who knew it best, and some of the greatest men longing to it had a high opinion of him.

When he came to bid us good-bye, he brought his mother with him for the first e. She was a pretty old lady, with bright black eyes, but she seemed proud. came from Wales; and had had, a long time ago, an eminent person for an stor, of the name of Morgan ap-Kerrig—of some place that sounded like llet- who was the most illustrious person that ever was known, and all of se relations were a sort of Royal Family. He appeared to have passed his life ways getting up into mountains, and fighting somebody; and a Bard whose sounded like Crumlinwallinwer had sung his prai-es, in a piece which was l, as nearly as I could catch it, Mewlinnwillinwodd.

s. Woodcourt, after expatiating to us on the fame of her great kinsman, said no doubt, wherever her son Allan went, he would remember his pedigree, ould on no account form an alliance below it. She told him that there were hand-ome English ladies in India who went out on speculation, and that were some to be picked up with property; but, that neither charms nor would suffice for the descendant from such a line, without birth: which ver be the first consideration. She talked so much about birth, that, for a t, I half fancied, and with pain—but, what an idle fancy to suppose that ld think or care what *mine* was!

Woodcourt seemed a little distressed by her prolixity, but he was too con- to let her see it, and contrived delicately to bring the conversation round ng his acknowledgments to my guardian for his hospitality, and for the py hours—he called them the very happy hours—he had passed with us. ollection of them, he said, would go with him wherever he went, and always treasured. And so we gave him our hands, one after another—they did—and I did; and so he put his lips to Ada's hand—and to mine went away *upon his long, long* voyage!

I was very busy indeed, all day, and wrote directions home to the servants, wrote notes for my guardian, and dusted his books and papers, and jingled housekeeping keys a good deal, one way and another. I was still busy betw the lights, singing and working by the window, when who should come in Caddy, whom I had no expectation of seeing!

"Why, Caddy, my dear," said I, "what beautiful flowers!"

She had such an exquisite little nosegay in her hand.

"Indeed, I think so, Esther," replied Caddy. "They are the loveliest I saw."

"Prince, my dear?" said I, in a whisper.

"No," answered Caddy, [illegible]ad, and holding them to me to s "Not Prince."

"Well, to be su[illegible] You must have two lovers!"

"What? D[illegible] thing?" said Caddy.

"Do they loo[illegible] I repeated, pinching her cheek.

Caddy onl[illegible]ng me that she had come for hal hour, at the [illegible]s would be waiting for her at the co sat chatting [illegible]ow: every now and then, handing the flowers [illegible] against my hair. At last, whe was going, she took me into [illegible] put them in my dress.

"For me?" said I, surpris[illegible]

"For you," said Caddy, with a kiss. "They were left behind by Somebo

"Left behind?"

"At poor Miss Flite's," said Caddy. "Somebody who has been very go her, was hurrying away an hour ago, to join a ship, and left these flowers be No, no! Don't take them out. Let the pretty little things lie here!" said Ca adjusting them with a careful hand, "because I was present myself, and I shou wonder if Somebody left them on purpose!"

"Do they look like that sort of thing?" said Ada, coming laughingly be me, and clasping me merrily round the waist. "O, yes, indeed they do, I Durden! They look very, very like that sort of thing. O, very like it in my dear!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

LADY DEDLOCK.

It was not so easy as it had appeared at first, to arrange for Richard's mak trial of Mr. Kenge's office. Richard himself was the chief impediment. As as he had it in his power to leave Mr. Badger at any moment, he began to d whether he wanted to leave him at all. He didn't know, he said, really wasn't a bad profession; he couldn't assert that he disliked it; perhaps he it as well as he liked any other—suppose he gave it one more chance! Upon he shut himself up, for a few weeks, with some books and some bones, and se to acquire a considerable fund of information with great rapidity. His fer after lasting about a month, began to cool; and when it was quite cooled, b to grow warm again. His vacillations between law and medicine lasted so that Midsummer arrived before he finally separated from Mr. Badger, and en on an experimental course of Messrs. Kenge and Carboy. For all his way

ook great credit to himself as being determined to be in earnest "this
nd he was so good-natured throughout, and in such high spirits, and so
da, that it was very difficult indeed to be otherwise than pleased with him.
Mr. Jarndyce," who, I may mention, found the wind much given,
s period, to stick in the east; "As to Mr. Jarndyce," Richard would
, "he is the finest fellow in the world, Esther! I must be particularly
it were only for his satisfaction, to take myself well to task, and have
wind-up of this business now."
a of his taking himself well to task, with that laughing face and heedless
nd with a fancy that everything could catch and nothing could hold,
rously anomalous. However, he told us between-whiles, that he was
to such an extent, that he wondered his hair didn't turn grey. His
nd-up of the business was (as I have said), that he went to Mr. Kenge's
lsummer, to try how he liked it.
time he was, in money affairs, what I have described him in a former
: generous, profuse, wildly careless, but fully persuaded that he was
ulating and prudent. I happened to say to Ada, in his presence, half-
half-seriously, about the time of his going to Mr. Kenge's, that he
have Fortunatus's purse, he made so light of money, which he answered
y:
ewel of a dear cousin, you hear this old woman! Why does she say
cause I gave eight pounds odd (or whatever it was) for a certain neat
and buttons a few days ago. Now, if I had stayed at Badger's I should
obliged to spend twelve pounds at a blow, for some heart-breaking
s. So I make four pounds—in a lump—by the transaction!"
a question much discussed between him and my guardian what arrange-
uld be made for his living in London, while he experimented on the law;
d long since gone back to Bleak House, and it was too far off to admit
ming there oftener than once a week. My guardian told me that if
ere to settle down at Mr. Kenge's he would take some apartments or
where we, too, could occasionally stay for a few days at a time; "but
an," he added, rubbing his head very significantly, "he hasn't settled
e yet!" The discussions ended in our hiring for him, by the month, a
furnished lodging in a quiet old house near Queen Square. He imme-
gan to spend all the money he had, in buying the oddest little ornaments
ies for this lodging; and so often as Ada and I dissuaded him from
y purchase that he had in contemplation which was particularly unne-
d expensive, he took credit for what it would have cost, and made out
end anything less on something else was to save the difference.
hese affairs were in abeyance, our visit to Mr. Boythorn's was postponed.
, Richard having taken possession of his lodging, there was nothing to
r departure. He could have gone with us at that time of the year, very
he was in the full novelty of his new position, and was making most
attempts to unravel the mysteries of the fatal suit. Consequently
without him; and my darling was delighted to praise him for being

de a pleasant journey down into Lincolnshire by the coach, and had an
ng companion in Mr. Skimpole. His furniture had been all cleared off,
d, by the person who took possession of it on his blue-eyed daughter's
but, he seemed quite relieved to think that it was gone. Chairs and
said, were wearisome objects; they were monotonous ideas, they had no
expression, they looked you out of countenance, and you looked them
ntenance. *How pleasant, then, to be bound to no particular chairs and*

tables, but to sport like a butterfly among all the furniture on hire, and to f
rosewood to mahogany, and from mahogany to walnut, and from this st
that, as the humour took one!

"The oddity of the thing is," said Mr. Skimpole, with a quickened sens
ludicrous, "that my chairs and tables were not paid for, and yet my landlor
off with them as composedly as possible. Now, that seems droll! There i
thing grotesque in it. The chair and table merchant never engaged to
landlord my rent. Why should my landlord quarrel with *him*? If I
pimple on my nose which is disagreeable to my landlord's peculiar ideas of
my landlord has no business to scratch my chair and table merchant's nose
has no pimple on it. His reasoning seems defective!"

"Well," said my guardian, good-humouredly, "it's pretty clear that
became security for those chairs and tables will have to pay for them."

"Exactly!" returned Mr. Skimpole. "That's the crowning point of u
in the business! I said to my landlord, 'My good man, you are not aw
my excellent friend Jarndyce will have to pay for those things that you are s
off in that indelicate manner. Have you no consideration for *his* property
hadn't the least."

"And refused all proposals," said my guardian.

"Refused all proposals," returned Mr. Skimpole. "I made him busin
posals. I had him into my room. I said, 'You are a man of business, I b
He replied, 'I am.' 'Very well,' said I, 'now let us be business-like.
an inkstand, here are pens and paper, here are wafers. What do you wa
have occupied your house for a considerable period, I believe to our mutu
faction until this unpleasant misunderstanding arose; let us be at once frien
business-like. What do you want?' In reply to this, he made use of t
rative expression—which has something Eastern about it—that he had no
the colour of my money. 'My amiable friend,' said I, 'I never have any
I never know anything about money.' 'Well, sir,' said he, 'what do you
I give you time?' 'My good fellow,' said I, 'I have no idea of time; b
say you are a man of business, and whatever you can suggest to be do
business-like way with pen, and ink, and paper—and wafers—I am ready
Don't pay yourself at another man's expense (which is foolish), but be b
like!' However, he wouldn't be, and there was an end of it."

If these were some of the inconveniences of Mr. Skimpole's childhood
surely possessed its advantages too. On the journey he had a very good a
for such refreshment as came in our way (including a basket of choice ho
peaches), but never thought of paying for anything. So when the coachma
round for his fee, he pleasantly asked him what he considered a very g
indeed, now—a liberal one—and, on his replying, half-a-crown for a sing
senger, said it was little enough too, all things considered; and left Mr. Ja
to give it him.

It was delightful weather. The green corn waved so beautifully, the lar
so joyfully, the hedges were so full of wild flowers, the trees were so thic
in leaf, the bean-fields, with a light wind blowing over them, filled the a
such a delicious fragrance! Late in the afternoon we came to the marke
where we were to alight from the coach—a dull little town, with a church
and a market-place, and a market-cross, and one intensely sunny street, and
with an old horse cooling his legs in it, and a very few men sleepily lyi
standing about in narrow little bits of shade. After the rustling of the lea
the waving of the corn all along the road, it looked as still, as hot, as motio
little town as England could produce.

At the inn, we found Mr. Boythorn on horseback, waiting with an open ca

take us to his house, which was a few miles off. He was overjoyed to see us, l dismounted with great alacrity.

"By Heaven!" said he, after giving us a courteous greeting, "this is a most amous coach. It is the most flagrant example of an abominable public vehicle it ever encumbered the face of the earth. It is twenty-five minutes after its e, this afternoon. The coachman ought to be put to death!"

"*Is* he after his time?" said Mr. Skimpole, to whom he happened to address nself. "You know my infirmity."

"Twenty-five minutes! Twenty-six minutes!" replied Mr. Boythorn, referring his watch. "With two ladies in the coach, this scoundrel has deliberately layed his arrival six-and-twenty minutes. Deliberately! It is impossible that can be accidental! But his father—and his uncle—were the most profligate achmen that ever sat upon a box."

While he said this in tones of the greatest indignation, he handed us into the le phaeton with the utmost gentleness, and was all smiles and pleasure.

"I am sorry, ladies," he said, standing bare-headed at the carriage-door, when was ready, "that I am obliged to conduct you nearly two miles out of the way. t, our direct road lies through Sir Leicester Dedlock's park; and, in that low's property, I have sworn never to set foot of mine, or horse's foot of mine, nding the present relations between us, while I breathe the breath of life!" id here, catching my guardian's eye, he broke into one of his tremendous laughs, ich seemed to shake even the motionless little market-town.

"Are the Dedlocks down here, Lawrence?" said my guardian as we drove ng, and Mr. Boythorn trotted on the green turf by the roadside.

"Sir Arrogant Numskull is here," replied Mr. Boythorn. "Ha ha ha! Sir rogant is here, and I am glad to say, has been laid by the heels here. My dy," in naming whom he always made a courtly gesture as if particularly to lude her from any part in the quarrel, "is expected, I believe, daily. I am not the least surprised that she postpones her appearance as long as possible. hatever can have induced that transcendent woman to marry that effigy and ire-head of a baronet, is one of the most impenetrable mysteries that ever fled human inquiry. Ha ha ha ha!"

"I suppose," said my guardian laughing, "*we* may set foot in the park while are here? The prohibition does not extend to us, does it?"

"I can lay no prohibition on my guests," he said, bending his head to Ada and , with the smiling politeness which sat so gracefully upon him, "except in the tter of their departure. I am only sorry that I cannot have the happiness of ng their escort about Chesney Wold, which is a very fine place! But, by the ht of this summer day, Jarndyce, if you call upon the owner, while you stay h me, you are likely to have but a cool reception. He carries himself like an ght-day clock at all times; like one of a race of eight-day clocks in gorgeous es that never go and never went—Ha ha ha!—but he will have some extra fness, I can promise you, for the friends of his friend and neighbour, ythorn!"

"I shall not put him to the proof," said my guardian. "He is as indifferent to honour of knowing me, I dare say, as I am to the honour of knowing him. The of the grounds, and perhaps such a view of the house as any other sight-seer ght get, are quite enough for me."

"Well!" said Mr. Boythorn, "I am glad of it on the whole. It's in better eping. I am looked upon, about here, as a second Ajax defying the lightning. a ha ha ha! When I go into our little church on a Sunday, a considerable part the inconsiderable congregation expect to see me drop, scorched and withered, the pavement under *the Dedlock* displeasure. Ha ha ha ha! I have no doubt

he is surprised that I don't. For he is, by Heaven! the most self-satisfied, and the shallowest, and the most coxcombical and utterly brainless ass!"

Our coming to the ridge of a hill we had been ascending, enabled our friend to point out Chesney Wold itself to us, and diverted his attention from its master.

It was a picturesque old house, in a fine park richly wooded. Among the trees, and not far from the residence, he pointed out the spire of the little church of which he had spoken. O, the solemn woods over which the light and shadow travelled swiftly, as if Heavenly wings were sweeping on benignant errands through the summer air; the smooth green slopes, the glittering water, the garden where the flowers were so symmetrically arranged in clusters of the richest colours, how beautiful they looked! The house, [illegible]ble and chimney, and tower, and turret, and dark doorway, and broad t[illegible]lk, twining among the balustrades of which, and lying heaped upon the [illegible]here was one great flush of roses, seemed scarcely real in its light solidity, [illegible]n the serene and peaceful hush that rested on all around it. To Ada and to [illegible]t, above all, appeared the pervading influence. On everything, house, gar[illegible]ace, green slopes, water, old oaks, fern, moss, woods again, and far away [illegible]he openings in the prospect, to the distance lying wide before us with a [illegible]loom upon it, there seemed to be such undisturbed repose.

When we came into the little village, and p[illegible]sed a small inn with the sign of the Dedlock Arms swinging over the road in fron[illegible], Mr. Boythorn interchanged greetings with a young gentleman sitting on a bench outside the inn-door, who had some fishing-tackle lying beside him.

"That's the housekeeper's grandson, Mr. Rouncewell by name," said he; "and he is in love with a pretty girl up at the House. Lady Dedlock has taken a fancy to the pretty girl, and is going to keep her about her own fair person—an honour which my young friend himself does not at all appreciate. However, he can't marry just yet, even if his Rosebud were willing; so he is fain to make the best of it. In the meanwhile, he comes here pretty often, for a day or two at a time, to—fish. Ha ha ha ha!"

"Are he and the pretty girl engaged, Mr. Boythorn?" asked Ada.

"Why, my dear Miss Clare," he returned, "I think they may perhaps understand each other; but you will see them soon, I dare say, and I must learn from you on such a point—not you from me."

Ada blushed; and Mr. Boythorn, trotting forward on his comely grey horse, dismounted at his own door, and stood ready, with extended arm and uncovered head, to welcome us when we arrived.

He lived in a pretty house, formerly the Parsonage-house, with a lawn in front, a bright flower-garden at the side, and a well-stocked orchard and kitchen-garden in the rear, enclosed with a venerable wall that had of itself a ripened ruddy look. But, indeed, everything about the place wore an aspect of maturity and abundance. The old lime-tree walk was like green cloisters, the very shadows of the cherry-trees and apple-trees were heavy with fruit, the gooseberry-bushes were so laden that their branches arched and rested on the earth, the strawberries and raspberries grew in like profusion, and the peaches basked by the hundred on the wall. Tumbled about among the spread nets and the glass frames sparkling and winking in the sun, there were such heaps of drooping pods, and marrows, and cucumbers, that every foot of ground appeared a vegetable treasury, while the smell of sweet herbs and all kinds of wholesome growth (to say nothing of the neighbouring meadows where the hay was carrying) made the whole air a great nosegay. Such stillness and composure reigned within the orderly precincts of the old red wall, that even the feathers hung in garlands to scare the birds hardly stirred; and the wall had such a ripening influence that where, here and there high up, a disused

crap of list still clung to it, it was easy to fancy that they had mellowed changing seasons, and that they had rusted and decayed according to the fate.

use, though a little disorderly in comparsion with the garden, was a real old th settles in the chimney of the brick-floored kitchen, and great beams ceilings. On one side of it was the terrible piece of ground in dispute, . Boythorn maintained a sentry in a smock-frock, day and night, whose supposed to be, in cases of aggression, immediately to ring a large bell here for the purpose, to unchain a great bull-dog established in a kennel , and generally to deal destruction on the enemy. Not content with cautions, Mr. Boythorn had himself composed and posted there, on boards to which his name was attached in large letters, the following arnings: "Beware of the Bull-dog. He is most ferocious. Lawrence ." "The blunderbuss is loaded with slugs. Lawrence Boythorn." aps and spring-guns are set here at all times of the day and night. Law- thorn." "Take notice. That any person or persons audaciously pre- trespass on this property, will be punished with the utmost severity of astisement, and prosecuted with the utmost rigour of the law. Lawrence ." These he showed us, from the drawing-room window, while his bird ing about his head; and he laughed, "Ha ha ha ha! Ha ha ha ha!" tent as he pointed them out, that I really thought he would have hurt

his is taking a good deal of trouble," said Mr. Skimpole in his light way, ou are not in earnest after all?"

n earnest!" returned Mr. Boythorn, with unspeakable warmth. "Not ! If I could have hoped to train him, I would have bought a Lion that dog, and would have turned him loose upon the first intolerable o should dare to make an encroachment on my rights. Let Sir Leices- k consent to come out and decide this question by single combat, and t him with any weapon known to mankind in any age or country. I am in earnest. Not more!"

ived at his house on a Saturday. On the Sunday morning we all set alk to the little church in the park. Entering the park, almost imme- the disputed ground, we pursued a pleasant footpath winding among t turf and the beautiful trees, until it brought us to the church-porch. ngregation was extremely small and quite a rustic one, with the excep- large muster of servants from the House, some of whom were already in , while others were yet dropping in. There were some stately footmen; was a perfect picture of an old coachman, who looked as if he were the presentative of all the pomps and vanities that had ever been put into . There was a very pretty show of young women; and above them, some old face and fine responsible portly figure of the housekeeper, re-eminent. The pretty girl, of whom Mr. Boythorn had told us, was her. She was so very pretty, that I might have known her by her en if I had not seen how blushingly conscious she was of the eyes of the erman, whom I discovered not far off. One face, and not an agreeable gh it was handsome, seemed maliciously watchful of this pretty girl, and every one and everything there. It was a Frenchwoman's.

bell was yet ringing and the great people were not yet come, I had glance over the church, which smelt as earthy as a grave, and to think ady, ancient, solemn little church it was. The windows, heavily shaded admitted a subdued light that made the faces around me pale, and dark- old brasses in the *pavement*, and the time and damp-worn monuments,

and rendered the sunshine in the little porch, where a monotonous ringer was working at the bell, inestimably bright. But a stir in that direction, a gathering of reverential awe in the rustic faces, and a blandly-ferocious assumption on the part of Mr. Boythorn of being resolutely unconscious of somebody's existence, forewarned me that the great people were come, and that the service was going to begin.

"'Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight——'"

Shall I ever forget the rapid beating at my heart, occasioned by the look I met, as I stood up! Shall I ever forget the manner in which those handsome proud eyes seemed to spring out of the[illegible], and to hold mine! It was only a moment before I cast mine down—[illegible]gain, if I may say so—on my book; but, I knew the beautiful face quite [illegible]at short space of time.

And, very strangely, there was som[illegible]uickened within me, associated with the lonely days at my godmother's; [illegible]y even to the days when I had stood on tiptoe to dress myself at my littl[illegible]after dressing my doll. And this, although I had never seen this lady's [illegible]fore in all my life—I was quite sure of it—absolutely certain.

It was easy to know that the ceremo[illegible] gouty, grey-haired gentleman, the only other occupant of the great pew, w[illegible]r Leicester Dedlock; and that the lady was Lady Dedlock. But why her [illegible]hould be, in a confused way, like a broken glass to me, in which I saw scraps o[illegible]ld remembrances; and why I should be so fluttered and troubled (for I was still), by having casually met her eyes; I could not think.

I felt it to be an unmeaning weakness in me, and tried to overcome it by attending to the words I heard. Then, very strangely, I seemed to hear them, not in the reader's voice, but in the well-remembered voice of my godmother. This made me think, did Lady Dedlock's face accidentally resemble my godmother's? It might be that it did, a little; but, the expression was so different, and the stern decision which had worn into my godmother's face, like weather into rocks, was so completely wanting in the face before me, that it could not be that resemblance which had struck me. Neither did I know the loftiness and haughtiness of Lady Dedlock's face, at all, in any one. And yet *I*—*I*, little Esther Summerson, the child who lived a life apart, and on whose birthday there was no rejoicing—seemed to arise before my own eyes, evoked out of the past by some power in this fashionable lady, whom I not only entertained no fancy that I had ever seen, but whom I perfectly well knew I had never seen until that hour.

It made me tremble so, to be thrown into this unaccountable agitation, that I was conscious of being distressed even by the observation of the French maid, though I knew she had been looking watchfully here, and there, and everywhere, from the moment of her coming into the church. By degrees, though very slowly, I at last overcame my strange emotion. After a long time, I looked towards Lady Dedlock again. It was while they were preparing to sing, before the sermon. She took no heed of me, and the beating at my heart was gone. Neither did it revive for more than a few moments, when she once or twice afterwards glanced at Ada or at me through her glass.

The service being concluded, Sir Leicester gave his arm with much taste and gallantry to Lady Dedlock—though he was obliged to walk by the help of a thick stick—and escorted her out of church to the pony carriage in which they had [illegible] The servants then dispersed, and so did the congregation; whom Sir Leicest[illegible] contemplated all along (Mr. Skimpole said to Mr. Boythorn's infinite delight), [illegible] he were a considerable landed proprietor in Heaven.

"He believes he is!" said Mr. Boythorn. "He firmly believes it. So did his *father, and his* grandfather, and his great-grandfather!"

"Do you know," pursued Mr. Skimpole, very unexpectedly to Mr. Boythorn, "it's agreeable to me to see a man of that sort."

"*Is* it!" said Mr. Boythorn.

"Say that he wants to patronise me," pursued Mr. Skimpole. "Very well! I don't object."

"*I* do," said Mr. Boythorn, with great vigour.

"Do you really?" returned Mr. Skimpole, in his easy light vein. "But, that's taking trouble, surely. And why should you take trouble? Here am I, content to receive things childishly, as they fall out: and I never take trouble! I come down here, for instance, and I find a mighty potentate, exacting homage. Very well! I say 'Mighty potentate, here *is* my homage! It's easier to give it, than to withhold it. Here it is. If you have anything of an agreeable nature to show me, I shall be happy to see it; if you have anything of an agreeable nature to give me, I shall be happy to accept it.' Mighty potentate replies in effect, 'This is a sensible fellow. I find him accord with my digestion and my bilious system. He doesn't impose upon me the necessity of rolling myself up like a hedgehog with my points outward. I expand, I open, I turn my silver lining outward like Milton's cloud, and it's more agreeable to both of us.' That's my view of such things: speaking as a child!"

"But suppose you went down somewhere else to-morrow," said Mr. Boythorn, "where there was the opposite of that fellow—or of this fellow—How then?"

"How then?" said Mr. Skimpole, with an appearance of the utmost simplicity and candour. "Just the same then! I should say, 'My esteemed Boythorn'—to make you the personification of our imaginary friend—'my esteemed Boythorn, you object to the mighty potentate? Very good. So do I. I take it that my business in the social system is to be agreeable; I take it that everybody's business in the social system is to be agreeable. It's a system of harmony, in short. Therefore if you object, I object. Now, excellent Boythorn, let us go to dinner!'"

"But excellent Boythorn might say," returned our host, swelling and growing very red, "I'll be——"

"I understand," said Mr. Skimpole. "Very likely he would."

"——if I *will* go to dinner!" cried Mr. Boythorn, in a violent burst, and stopping to strike his stick upon the ground. "And he would probably add, 'Is there such a thing as principle, Mr. Harold Skimpole?'"

"To which Harold Skimpole would reply, you know," he returned in his gayest manner, and with his most ingenuous smile, "'Upon my life I have not the least idea! I don't know what it is you call by that name, or where it is, or who possesses it. If you possess it, and find it comfortable, I am quite delighted, and congratulate you heartily. But I know nothing about it, I assure you; for I am a mere child, and I lay no claim to it, and I don't want it!' So, you see, excellent Boythorn and I would go to dinner after all!"

This was one of many little dialogues between them, which I always expected to end, and which I dare say would have ended under other circumstances, in some violent explosion on the part of our host. But he had so high a sense of his hospitable and responsible position as our entertainer, and my guardian laughed so merrily at and with Mr. Skimpole, as a child who blew bubbles and broke them all day long, that matters never went beyond this point. Mr. Skimpole, who always seemed quite unconscious of having been on delicate ground, then betook himself to beginning some sketch in the park which he never finished, or to playing fragments of airs on the piano, or to singing scraps of songs, or to lying down on his back under a tree, and looking at the sky—which he couldn't help thinking, he said, was what he was meant for; it suited him so exactly.

"Enterprise and *effort*," he would say to us (on his back), "are delightful to

me. I believe I am truly cosmopolitan. I have the deepest sympathy with them. I lie in a shady place like this, and think of adventurous spirits going to the North Pole, or penetrating to the heart of the Torrid Zone, with admiration. Mercenary creatures ask, 'What is the use of a man's going to the North Pole? What good does it do?' I can't say; but, for anything I *can* say, he may go for the purpose—though he don't know it—of employing my thoughts as I lie here. Take an extreme case. Take the case of the Slaves on American plantations. I dare say they are worked hard, I dare say they don't altogether like it, I dare say there is an unpleasant experience on the whole; but, they people the landscape for me, they give it a poetry for me, and p[illegible] that is one of the pleasanter objects of their existence. I am very sensibl[illegible] it be, and I shouldn't wonder if it were!"

I always wondered on these occasio[illegible]er he ever thought of Mrs. Skimpole and the children, and in what poin[illegible]ey presented themselves to his cosmopolitan mind. So far as I coul[illegible]d, they rarely presented themselves at all.

The week had gone round to the [illegible] following that beating of my heart in the church; and every day had b[illegible]ght and blue, that to ramble in the woods, and to see the light strikin[illegible] among the transparent leaves, and sparkling in the beautiful interlacing[illegible] hadows of the trees, while the birds poured out their songs, and the air was [illegible]y with the hum of insects, had been most delightful. We had one favourite spot, deep in moss and last year's leaves, where there were some felled trees from which the bark was all stripped off. Seated among these, we looked through a green vista supported by thousands of natural columns, the whitened stems of trees, upon a distant prospect made so radiant by its contrast with the shade in which we sat, and made so precious by the arched perspective through which we saw it, that it was like a glimpse of the better land. Upon the Saturday we sat here, Mr. Jarndyce, Ada, and I, until we heard thunder muttering in the distance, and felt the large rain-drops rattle through the leaves.

The weather had been all the week extremely sultry; but, the storm broke so suddenly—upon us, at least, in that sheltered spot—that before we reached the outskirts of the wood, the thunder and lightning were frequent, and the rain came plunging through the leaves, as if every drop were a great leaden bead. As it was not a time for standing among trees, we ran out of the wood, and up and down the moss-grown steps which crossed the plantation-fence like two broad-staved ladders placed back to back, and made for a keeper's lodge which was close at hand. We had often noticed the dark beauty of this lodge standing in a deep twilight of trees, and how the ivy clustered over it, and how there was a steep hollow near, where we had once seen the keeper's dog dive down into the fern as if it were water.

The lodge was so dark within, now the sky was overcast, that we only clearly saw the man who came to the door when we took shelter there, and put two chairs for Ada and me. The lattice-windows were all thrown open, and we sat, just within the doorway, watching the storm. It was grand to see how the wind awoke, and bent the trees, and drove the rain before it like a cloud of smoke; and to hear the solemn thunder, and to see the lightning; and while thinking with awe of the tremendous powers by which our little lives are encompassed, to consider how beneficent they are, and how upon the smallest flower and leaf there was already a freshness poured from all this seeming rage, which seemed to make creation new again.

"Is it not dangerous to sit in so exposed a place?"

"*O no, Esther dear!*" said Ada, quietly.

to me; but, *I* had not spoken.
of my heart came back again. I had never heard the voice, as I
n the face, but it affected me in the same strange way. Again, in a
e arose before my mind innumerable pictures of myself.
ock had taken shelter in the lodge, before our arrival there, and had
he gloom within. She stood behind my chair, with her hand upon
with her hand close to my shoulder, when I turned my head.
ghtened you?" she said.
s not fright. Why should I be frightened!
" said Lady Dedlock to my guardian, "I have the pleasure of speak-
ndyce."
embrance does me more honour than I had supposed it would, Lady
returned.
ed you in church on Sunday. I am sorry that any local disputes of
s—they are not of his seeking, however, I believe—should render it
me absurd difficulty to show you any attention here."
are of the circumstances," returned my guardian with a smile, "and
y obliged."
ven him her hand, in an indifferent way that seemed habitual to her,
a correspondingly indifferent manner, though in a very pleasant voice.
aceful as she was beautiful; perfectly self-possessed; and had the
, of being able to attract and interest any one, if she had thought it
le. The keeper had brought her a chair, on which she sat, in the
porch between us.
ng gentleman disposed of, whom you wrote to Sir Leicester about,
shes Sir Leicester was sorry not to have it in his power to advance in
he said, over her shoulder, to my guardian.
," said he.
to respect him, and even to wish to conciliate him. There was
y winning in her haughty manner; and it became more familiar—I
say more easy, but that could hardly be—as she spoke to him over

e this is your other ward, Miss Clare?"
ed Ada, in form.
lose the disinterested part of your Don Quixote character," said Lady
Mr. Jarndyce, over her shoulder again, "if you only redress the
uty like this. But present me," and she turned full upon me, "to
y too!"
merson really is my ward," said Mr. Jarndyce. "I am responsible
hancellor in her case."
Summerson lost both her parents?" said my Lady.

y fortunate in her guardian."
ock looked at me, and I looked at her, and said I was indeed. All
rned from me with a hasty air, almost expressive of displeasure or
oke to him over her shoulder again.
e passed since we were in the habit of meeting, Mr. Jarndyce."
me. At least I thought it was a long time, until I saw you last
eturned.
Even you are a courtier, or think it necessary to become one to me!"
some disdain. "I have achieved that reputation, I suppose."
achieved so much, Lady Dedlock," said my guardian, "that you pay
nalty, I dare say. *But none to me.*"

"So much!" she repeated, slightly laughing. "Yes!"

With her air of superiority, and power, and fascination, and I know not what, she seemed to regard Ada and me as little more than children. So, as she slightly laughed, and afterwards sat looking at the rain, she was as self-possessed, and as free to occupy herself with her own thoughts, as if she had been alone.

"I think you knew my sister, when we were abroad together, better than you knew me?" she said, looking at him again.

"Yes, we happened to meet oftener," he returned.

"We went our several ways," said Lady Dedlock, "and had little in common even before we agreed to differ. It is to be regretted, I suppose, but it could not be helped."

Lady Dedlock again sat looking at the rain. The storm soon began to pass upon its way. The shower greatly abated, the lightning ceased, the thunder rolled among the distant hills, and the sun began to glisten on the wet leaves and the falling rain. As we sat there, silently, we saw a little pony phaeton coming towards us at a merry pace.

"The messenger is coming back, my Lady," said the keeper, "with the carriage."

As it drove up, we saw that there were two people inside. There alighted from it, with some cloaks and wrappers, first the Frenchwoman whom I had seen in church, and secondly the pretty girl; the Frenchwoman, with a defiant confidence, the pretty girl confused and hesitating.

"What now?" said Lady Dedlock. "Two!"

"I am your maid, my Lady, at the present," said the Frenchwoman. "The message was for the attendant."

"I was afraid you might mean me, my Lady," said the pretty girl.

"I did mean you, child," replied her mistress, calmly. "Put that shawl on me."

She slightly stooped her shoulders to receive it, and the pretty girl lightly dropped it in its place. The Frenchwoman stood unnoticed, looking on with her lips very tightly set.

"I am sorry," said Lady Dedlock to Mr. Jarndyce, "that we are not likely to renew our former acquaintance. You will allow me to send the carriage back for your two wards. It shall be here directly."

But, as he would on no account accept this offer, she took a graceful leave of Ada—none of me—and put her hand upon his proffered arm, and got into the carriage; which was a little, low, park carriage, with a hood.

"Come in, child," she said to the pretty girl, "I shall want you. Go on!"

The carriage rolled away; and the Frenchwoman, with the wrappers she had brought hanging over her arm, remained standing where she had alighted.

I suppose there is nothing Pride can so little bear with, as Pride itself, and that she was punished for her imperious manner. Her retaliation was the most singular I could have imagined. She remained perfectly still until the carriage had turned into the drive, and then, without the least discomposure of countenance, slipped off her shoes, left them on the ground, and walked deliberately in the same direction, through the wettest of the wet grass.

"Is that young woman mad?" said my guardian.

"O no, sir!" said the keeper, who, with his wife, was looking after her. "Hortense is not one of that sort. She has as good a head-piece as the best. But she's mortal high and passionate—powerful high and passionate; and what with having notice to leave, and having others put above her, she don't take kindly to it."

"But why should she walk shoeless, through all that water?" said my guardian.

hy, indeed, sir, unless it is to cool her down!" said the man.
unless she fancies it's blood," said the woman. "She'd as soon walk
h that as anything else, I think, when her own 's up!"
passed not far from the House, a few minutes afterwards. Peaceful as it
oked when we first saw it, it looked even more so now, with a diamond
glittering all about it, a light wind blowing, the birds no longer hushed but
g strongly, everything refreshed by the late rain, and the little carriage
g at the doorway like a fairy carriage made of silver. Still, very steadfastly
ietly walking towards it, a peaceful figure too in the landscape, went
oiselle Hortense, shoeless, through the wet grass.

CHAPTER XIX.

MOVING ON.

e long vacation in the regions of Chancery Lane. The good ships Law
quity, those teak-built, copper-bottomed, iron-fastened, brazen-faced, and
any means fast-sailing Clippers, are laid up in ordinary. The Flying
nan, with a crew of ghostly clients imploring all whom they may encounter
use their papers, has drifted, for the time being, Heaven knows where.
ourts are all shut up; the public offices lie in a hot sleep; Westminster
self is a shady solitude where nightingales might sing, and a tenderer class
ers than is usually found there, walk.
Temple, Chancery Lane, Serjeants' Inn, and Lincoln's Inn even unto the
are like tidal harbours at low water; where stranded proceedings, offices
ior, idle clerks lounging on lop-sided stools that will not recover their per-
ular until the current of Term sets in, lie high and dry upon the ooze of the
acation. Outer doors of chambers are shut up by the score, messages and
are to be left at the Porter's Lodge by the bushel. A crop of grass would
n the chinks of the stone pavement outside Lincoln's Inn Hall, but that the
porters, who have nothing to do beyond sitting in the shade there, with
white aprons over their heads to keep the flies off, grub it up and eat it
itfully.
re is only one Judge in town. Even he only comes twice a-week to sit in
ers. If the country folks of those assize towns on his circuit could see him
No full-bottomed wig, no red petticoats, no fur, no javelin-men, no white
. Merely a close-shaved gentleman in white trousers and a white hat, with
nze on the judicial countenance, and a strip of bark peeled by the solar rays
he judicial nose, who calls in at the shell-fish shop as he comes along, and
iced ginger-beer!
bar of England is scattered over the face of the earth. How England can
through four long summer months without its bar—which is its acknow-
refuge in adversity, and its only legitimate triumph in prosperity—is beside
estion; assuredly that shield and buckler of Britannia are not in present
The learned gentleman who is always so tremendously indignant at the
edented outrage committed on the feelings of his client by the opposite
that he never seems likely to recover it, is doing infinitely better than might
pected, in Switzerland. The learned gentleman who does the withering
ss, and who blights all opponents with his gloomy sarcasm, is as merry as a
a French watering-place. The learned gentleman who weeps by the pint

on the smallest provocation, has not shed a tear these six weeks. The very gentleman who has cooled the natural heat of his gingery complexion in p fountains of law, until he has become great in knotty arguments for ter when he poses the drowsy Bench with legal "chaff," inexplicable to initiated and to most of the initiated too, is roaming, with a characteristic in aridity and dust, about Constantinople. Other dispersed fragments of t great Palladium are to be found on the canals of Venice, at the second cat the Nile, in the baths of Germany, and sprinkled on the sea-sand all a English coast. Scarcely one is to be encountered in the deserted re Chancery Lane. If such a lonely member of the bar do flit across the wa come upon a prowling suitor who is unable to leave off haunting the scen anxiety, they frighten one another, and retreat into opposite shades.

It is the hottest long vacation known for many years. All the young cl madly in love, and, according to their various degrees, pine for bliss w beloved object, at Margate, Ramsgate, or Gravesend. All the midd clerks think their families too large. All the unowned dogs who stray i Inns of Court, and pant about staircases and other dry places, seeking wat short howls of aggravation. All the blind men's dogs in the streets dr masters against pumps, or trip them over buckets. A shop with a sun-bli a watered pavement, and a bowl of gold and silver fish in the windo sanctuary. Temple Bar gets so hot, that it is, to the adjacent Strand an Street, what a heater is in an urn, and keeps them simmering all night.

There are offices about the Inns of Court in which a man might be cool coolness were worth purchasing at such a price in dulness; but, the little th fares immediately outside those retirements seem to blaze. In Mr. Krook it is so hot that the people turn their houses inside out, and sit in chairs u pavement—Mr. Krook included, who there pursues his studies, with his c never is too hot) by his side. The Sol's Arms has discontinued the h meetings for the season, and Little Swills is engaged at the Pastoral down the river, where he comes out in quite an innocent manner, and sing ditties of a juvenile complexion, calculated (as the bill says) not to wo feelings of the most fastidious mind.

Over all the legal neighbourhood, there hangs, like some great veil of gigantic cobweb, the idleness and pensiveness of the long vacation. Mr. S law-stationer of Cook's Court, Cursitor Street, is sensible of the influen only in his mind as a sympathetic and contemplative man, but also in his as a law-stationer aforesaid. He has more leisure for musing in Staple In the Rolls Yard, during the long vacation, than at other seasons; and he the two 'prentices, what a thing it is in such hot weather to think that you an island, with the sea a-rolling and a-bowling right round you.

Guster is busy in the little drawing-room, on this present afternoon in t vacation, when Mr. and Mrs. Snagsby have it in contemplation to company. The expected guests are rather select than numerous, being Mrs. Chadband, and no more. From Mr. Chadband's being much g describe himself, both verbally and in writing, as a vessel, he is occasiona taken by strangers for a gentleman connected with navigation; but, he i expresses it, "in the ministry." Mr. Chadband is attached to no p denomination; and is considered by his persecutors to have nothing remarkable to say on the greatest of subjects as to render his volunteering own account, at all incumbent on his conscience: but, he has his follow Mrs. Snagsby is of the number. Mrs. Snagsby has but recently taken a upward by the vessel, Chadband; and her attention was attracted to that B *when she was something* flushed by the hot weather.

ittle woman," says Mr. Snagsby to the sparrows in Staple Inn, "likes to
religion rather sharp, you see!"
ster, much impressed by regarding herself for the time as the handmaid
and, whom she knows to be endowed with the gift of holding forth for
s at a stretch, prepares the little drawing-room for tea. All the furniture
and dusted, the portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Snagsby are touched up with
th, the best tea-service is set forth, and there is excellent provision made
new bread, crusty twists, cool fresh butter, thin slices of ham, tongue
man sausage, and delicate little rows of anchovies nestling in parsley;
ntion new-laid eggs, to be brought up warm in a napkin, and hot buttered
or, Chadband is rather a consuming vessel—the persecutors say a gorging
nd can wield such weapons of the flesh as a knife and fork, remarkably

agsby in his best coat, looking at all the preparations when they are
d, and coughing his cough of deference behind his hand, says to Mrs.
"At what time did you expect Mr. and Mrs. Chadband, my love?"
x," says Mrs. Snagsby.
agsby observes in a mild and casual way, that "it's gone that."
aps you'd like to begin without them," is Mrs. Snagsby's reproachful

agsby does look as if he would like it very much, but he says, with his
mildness, "No, my dear, no. I merely named the time."
t's time," says Mrs. Snagsby, "to eternity?"
true, my dear," says Mr. Snagsby. "Only when a person lays in
or tea, a person does it with a view—perhaps—more to time. And when
named for having tea, it's better to come up to it."
ome up to it!" Mrs. Snagsby repeats with severity. "Up to it! As
adband was a fighter!"
at all, my dear," says Mr. Snagsby.
Guster, who had been looking out of the bedroom window, comes rust-
scratching down the little staircase like a popular ghost, and, falling flushed
drawing-room, announces that Mr. and Mrs. Chadband have appeared in
. The bell at the inner door in the passage immediately thereafter tink-
is admonished by Mrs. Snagsby, on pain of instant reconsignment to her
int, not to omit the ceremony of announcement. Much discomposed in
s (which were previously in the best order) by this threat, she so fearfully
that point of state as to announce "Mr. and Mrs. Cheeseming, least
meantersay, whatsername!" and retires conscience-stricken from the

adband is a large yellow man, with a fat smile, and a general appearance
a good deal of train oil in his system. Mrs. Chadband is a stern, severe-
silent woman. Mr. Chadband moves softly and cumbrously, not unlike
ho has been taught to walk upright. He is very much embarrassed about
, as if they were inconvenient to him, and he wanted to grovel; is very
a perspiration about the head; and never speaks without first putting up
hand, as delivering a token to his hearers that he is going to edify them.
friends," says Mr. Chadband, "Peace be on this house! On the master
on the mistress thereof, on the young maidens, and on the young men!
is, why do I wish for peace? What is peace? Is it war? No. Is it strife?
t lovely, and gentle, and beautiful, and pleasant, and serene, and joyful?
Therefore, my friends, I wish for peace, upon you and upon yours."
sequence of Mrs. Snagsby looking deeply edified, Mr. Snagsby thinks it
t on the whole to say Amen, which is well received.

"Now, my friends," proceeds Mr. Chadband, "since I am upon this t
Guster presents herself. Mrs. Snagsby, in a spectral bass voice, and
removing her eyes from Chadband, says, with dread distinctness, "Go aw
"Now my friends," says Chadband, "since I am upon this theme, a
lowly path improving it——"
Guster is heard unaccountably to murmur "one thousing seven hun
eighty-two." The spectral voice repeats more solemnly, "Go away!"
"Now, my friends," says Mr. Chadband, "we will inquire in a spirit of
Still Guster reiterates "one thousing seven hundred and eighty-two."
Mr. Chadband, pausing with the resignation of a man accustomed to
secuted, and languidly folding up his chin into his fat smile, says, "Le
the maiden! Speak, maiden!"
"One thousing seven hundred and eighty-two, if you please, sir. W
wish to know what the shilling ware for," says Guster, breathless.
"For?" returns Mrs. Chadband. "For his fare!"
Guster replied that "he insistes on one and eightpence, or on summonsi
party." Mrs. Snagsby and Mrs. Chadband are proceeding to grow shrill
nation, when Mr. Chadband quiets the tumult by lifting up his hand.
"My friends," says he, "I remember a duty unfulfilled yesterday. It
that I should be chastened in some penalty. I ought not to murmur. I
pay the eightpence!"
While Mrs. Snagsby, drawing her breath, looks hard at Mr. Snagsby
should say, "You hear this Apostle!" and while Mr. Chadband glows with
and train oil, Mrs. Chadband pays the money. It is Mr. Chadband's ha
the head and front of his pretensions indeed—to keep this sort of del
creditor account in the smallest items, and to post it publicly on the mo
occasions.
"My friends," says Chadband, "eightpence is not much; it might ju
been one and fourpence; it might justly have been half-a-crown. O l
joyful, joyful! O let us be joyful!"
With which remark, which appears from its sound to be an extract in w
Chadband stalks to the table, and, before taking a chair, lifts up his ad
hand.
"My friends," says he, "what is this which we now behold as being
before us? Refreshment. Do we need refreshment then, my friends?
And why do we need refreshment, my friends? Because we are but
because we are but sinful, because we are but of the earth, because we a
the air. Can we fly, my friends? We cannot. Why can we not
friends?"
Mr. Snagsby, presuming on the success of his last point, ventures to ob
a cheerful and rather knowing tone, "No wings." But, is immediately
down by Mrs. Snagsby.
"I say, my friends," pursues Mr. Chadband, utterly rejecting and obl
Mr. Snagsby's suggestion, "why can we not fly? Is it because we are c
to walk? It is. Could we walk, my friends, without strength? We co
What should we do without strength, my friends? Our legs would refus
us, our knees would double up, our ankles would turn over, and we shou
to the ground. Then from whence, my friends, in a human point of view
derive the strength that is necessary to our limbs? Is it," says Chadband,
over the table, "from bread in various forms, from butter which is churn
the milk which is yielded untoe us by the cow, from the eggs which are la
fowl, from ham, from tongue, from sausage, and from such like? It is.
us partake of the good things which are set before us!"

[redacted]

The persecutors denied that there was any particular gift in Mr. Chadband's piling verbose flights of stairs, one upon another, after this fashion. But this can only be received as a proof of their determination to persecute, since it must be within everybody's experience, that the Chadband style of oratory is widely received and much admired.

Mr. Chadband, however, having concluded for the present, sits down at Mr. Snagsby's table, and lays about him prodigiously. The conversion of nutriment of any sort into oil of the quality already mentioned, appears to be a process so inseparable from the constitution of this exemplary vessel, that in beginning to eat and drink, he may be described as always becoming a kind of considerable Oil Mills, or other large factory for the production of that article on a wholesale scale. On the present evening of the long vacation, in Cook's Court, Cursitor Street, he does such a powerful stroke of business, that the warehouse appears to be quite full when the works cease.

At this period of the entertainment, Guster, who has never recovered her first failure, but has neglected no possible or impossible means of bringing the establishment and herself into contempt—among which may be briefly enumerated her unexpectedly performing clashing military music on Mr. Chadband's head with plates, and afterwards crowning that gentleman with muffins—at which period of the entertainment, Guster whispers Mr. Snagsby that he is wanted.

"And being wanted in the—not to put too fine a point upon it—in the shop!" says Mr. Snagsby rising, "perhaps this good company will excuse me for half a minute."

Mr. Snagsby descends, and finds the two 'prentices intently contemplating a police constable, who holds a ragged boy by the arm.

"Why, bless my heart," says Mr. Snagsby, "what's the matter?"

"This boy," says the constable, "although he's repeatedly told to, won't move on—"

"I'm always a-moving on, sir," cries the boy, wiping away his grimy tears with his arm. "I've always been a-moving and a-moving on, ever since I was born. Where can I possible move to, sir, more nor I do move?"

"He won't move on," says the constable, calmly, with a slight professional hitch of his neck involving its better settlement in his stiff stock, "although he has been repeatedly cautioned, and therefore I am obliged to take him into custody. He's as obstinate a young gonoph as I know. He won't move on."

"O my eye! Where can I move to!" cries the boy, clutching quite desperately at his hair, and beating his bare feet upon the floor of Mr. Snagsby's passage.

"Don't you come none of that, or I shall make blessed short work of you!" says the constable, giving him a passionless shake. "My instructions are, that you are to move on. I have told you so five hundred times."

"But where?" cries the boy.

"Well! Really, constable, you know," says Mr. Snagsby wistfully, and coughing behind his hand his cough of great perplexity and doubt; "really that does seem a question. Where, you know?"

"My instructions don't go to that," replies the constable. "My instructions are that this boy is to move on."

Do you hear, Jo? It is nothing to you or to any one else, that the great lights of the parliamentary sky have failed for some few years, in this business, to set you the example of moving on. The one grand recipe remains for you—the profound philosophical prescription—the be-all and the end-all of your strange existence upon earth. Move on! You are by no means to move off, Jo, for the great lights can't at all agree about that. Move on!

Mr. Snagsby says nothing to this effect; says nothing at all, indeed; coughs his forlornest cough, expressive of no thoroughfare in any direction. this time Mr. and Mrs. Chadband, and Mrs. Snagsby, hearing the altera have appeared upon the stairs. Guster having never left the end of the pas the whole household are assembled.

"The simple question is, sir," says the constable, "whether you know boy. He says you do."

Mrs. Snagsby, from her elevation, instantly cries out, "No he don't!"

"My lit-tle woman!" says Mr. Snagsby, looking up the staircase. "My permit me! Pray have a moment's patience, my dear. I do know somethi this lad, and in what I know of him, I can't say that there's any harm; po on the contrary, constable." To whom the law-stationer relates his Jobs woful experience, suppressing the half-crown fact.

"Well!" says the constable, "so far, it seems, he had grounds for wh said. When I took him into custody up in Holborn, he said you knew Upon that, a young man who was in the crowd said he was acquainted with and you were a respectable housekeeper, and if I'd call and make the in he'd appear. The young man don't seem inclined to keep his word, but- Here *is* the young man!"

Enter Mr. Guppy, who nods to Mr. Snagsby, and touches his hat wi chivalry of clerkship to the ladies on the stairs.

"I was strolling away from the office just now, when I found this row on," says Mr. Guppy to the law-stationer; "and as your name was mentio thought it was right the thing should be looked into."

"It was very good-natured of you, sir," says Mr. Snagsby, "and I am ob to you." And Mr. Snagsby again relates his experience, again suppressi half crown fact.

"Now, I know where you live," says the constable, then, to Jo. "Yo down in Tom-all-Alone's. That's a nice innocent place to live in, ain't it?"

"I can't go and live in no nicer place, sir," replies Jo. "They wouldn't nothink to say to me if I wos to go to a nice innocent place fur to live. W go and let a nice innocent lodging to such a reg'lar one as me!"

"You are very poor, ain't you?" says the constable.

"Yes, I am indeed, sir, wery poor in gin'ral," replies Jo.

"I leave you to judge now! I shook these two half-crowns out of him," the constable, producing them to the company, "in only putting my hand him!"

"They're wot's left, Mr. Snagsby," says Jo, "out of a sov'ring as wa me by a lady in a wale as sed she wos a servant and as come to my cross night and asked to be showd this 'ere ouse and the ouse wot him as you g writin to died at, and the berrin-ground wot he's berrid in. She ses to a ses 'are you the boy at the Inkwhich?' she ses. I ses 'yes' I ses. She me she says 'can you show me all them places?' I ses 'yes I can' I ses. she says to me 'do it' and I dun it and she giv me a sov'ring and hook And I an't had much of the sov'ring neither," says Jo, with dirty tears, ' had to pay five bob, down in Tom-all-Alone's, afore they'd square it fur to gi change, and then a young man he thieved another five while I was asle another boy he thieved ninepence and the landlord he stood drains round lot more on it."

"You don't expect anybody to believe this, about the lady and the sov do you?" says the constable, eyeing him aside with ineffable disdain.

"I don't know as I do, sir," replies Jo. "I don't expect nothink at a *much, but* that's the true hist'ry on it."

"You see what he is!" the constable observes to the audience. "Well, Mr. Snagsby, if I don't lock him up this time, will you engage for his moving on?"

"No!" cries Mrs. Snagsby from the stairs.

"My little woman!" pleads her husband. "Constable, I have no doubt he'll move on. You know you really must do it," says Mr. Snagsby.

"I'm everyways agreeable, sir," says the hapless Jo.

"Do it, then," observes the constable. "You know what you have got to do. Do it! And recollect you won't get off so easy next time. Catch hold of your money. Now, the sooner you're five mile off, the better for all parties."

With this farewell hint, and pointing generally to the setting sun, as a likely place to move on to, the constable bids his auditors good afternoon; and makes the echoes of Cook's Court perform slow music for him as he walks away on the shady side, carrying his iron-bound hat in his hand for a little ventilation.

Now, Jo's improbable story concerning the lady and the sovereign has awakened more or less the curiosity of all the company. Mr. Guppy, who has an inquiring mind in matters of evidence, and who has been suffering severely from the lassitude of the long vacation, takes that interest in the case, that he enters on a regular cross-examination of the witness, which is found so interesting by the ladies that Mrs. Snagsby politely invites him to step up-stairs, and drink a cup of tea, if he will excuse the disarranged state of the tea-table, consequent on their previous exertions. Mr. Guppy yielding his assent to this proposal, Jo is requested to follow into the drawing-room doorway, where Mr. Guppy takes him in hand as a witness, patting him into this shape, that shape, and the other shape, like a butterman dealing with so much butter, and worrying him according to the best models. Nor is the examination unlike many such model displays, both in respect of its eliciting nothing, and of its being lengthy; for, Mr. Guppy is sensible of his talent, and Mrs. Snagsby feels, not only that it gratifies her inquisitive disposition, but that it lifts her husband's establishment higher up in the law. During the progress of this keen encounter, the vessel Chadband, being merely engaged in the oil trade, gets aground, and waits to be floated off.

"Well!" says Mr. Guppy, "either this boy sticks to it like cobbler's-wax, or there is something out of the common here that beats anything that ever came into my way at Kenge and Carboy's."

Mrs. Chadband whispers Mrs. Snagsby, who exclaims, "You don't say so!"

"For years!" replied Mrs. Chadband.

"Has known Kenge and Carboy's office for years," Mrs. Snagsby triumphantly explains to Mr. Guppy. "Mrs. Chadband—this gentleman's wife Reverend Mr. Chadband.

"Oh, indeed!" says Mr. Guppy.

"Before I married my present husband," says Mrs. Chadband.

"Was you a party in anything, ma'am?" says Mr. Guppy, transferring his cross-examination.

"No."

"*Not* a party in anything, ma'am?" says Mr. Guppy.

Mrs. Chadband shakes her head.

"Perhaps you were acquainted with somebody who was a party in something, ma'am?" says Mr. Guppy, who likes nothing better than to model his conversation on forensic principles.

"Not exactly that, either," replies Mrs. Chadband, humouring the joke with a hard-favoured smile.

"Not exactly that, either!" repeats Mr. Guppy. "Very good. Pray, ma'am, was it a lady of your acquaintance who had some transactions (we will not at present say what transactions) *with Kenge and* Carboy's office, or was it a gentleman

of your acquaintance? Take time, ma'am. We shall come to it presently. M
or woman, ma'am?"

"Neither," says Mrs. Chadband, as before.

"Oh! A child!" says Mr. Guppy, throwing on the admiring Mrs. Snag
the regular acute professional eye which is thrown on British jurymen. "No
ma'am, perhaps you'll have the kindness to tell us *what* child."

"You have got it at last, sir," says Mrs. Chadband, with another hard-favou
smile. "Well, sir, it was before your time, most likely, judging from yo
appearance. I was left in charge of a child named Esther Summerson, who w
put out in life by Messrs. Kenge and Carboy."

"Miss Summerson, ma'am!" cries Mr. Guppy, excited.

"*I* call her Esther Summerson," says Mrs. Chadband, with austerity. "Th
was no Miss-ing of the girl in my time. It was Esther. 'Esther, do this! Esth
do that!' and she was made to do it."

"My dear ma'am," returns Mr. Guppy, moving across the small apartme
"the humble individual who now addresses you received that young lady
London, when she first came here from the establishment to which you h
alluded. Allow me to have the pleasure of taking you by the hand."

Mr. Chadband, at last seeing his opportunity, makes his accustomed signal, a
rises with a smoking head, which he dabs with his pocket-handkerchief. M
Snagsby whispers "Hush!"

"My friends," says Chadband, "we have partaken in moderation" (wh
was certainly not the case so far as he was concerned), "of the comforts wh
have been provided for us. May this house live upon the fatness of the la
may corn and wine be plentiful therein; may it grow, may it thrive, may it pr
per, may it advance, may it proceed, may it press forward! But, my friends, h
we partaken of anything else? We have. My friends, of what else have
partaken? Of spiritual profit? Yes. From whence have we derived t
spiritual profit? My young friend, stand forth!"

Jo, thus apostrophised, gives a slouch backward, and another slouch forwa
and another slouch to each side, and confronts the eloquent Chadband, with
dent doubts of his intentions.

"My young friend," says Chadband, "you are to us a pearl, you are to u
diamond, you are to us a gem, you are to us a jewel. And why, my you
friend?

"*I* don't know," replies Jo. "I don't know nothink."

"My young friend," says Chadband, "it is because you know nothing t
you are to us a gem and jewel. For what are you, my young friend? Are
a beast of the field? No. A bird of the air? No. A fish of the sea or riv
No. You are a human boy, my young friend. A human boy. O glorious to
a human boy! And why glorious, my young friend? Because you are capa
of receiving the lessons of wisdom, because you are capable of profiting by
discourse which I now deliver for your good, because you are not a stick, o
staff, or a stock, or a stone, or a post, or a pillar.

> O running stream of sparkling joy
> To be a soaring human boy!

And do you cool yourself in that stream now, my young friend? No. Why
you not cool yourself in that stream now? Because you are in a state of darkn
because you are in a state of obscurity, because you are in a state of sinfuln
because you are in a state of bondage. My young friend, what *is* bondage?
us, in a spirit of love, inquire."

his threatening stage of the discourse, Jo, who seems to have been gradually out of his mind, smears his right arm over his face, and gives a terrible

Mrs. Snagsby indignantly expresses her belief that he is a limb of the end.

ly friends," says Mr. Chadband, with his persecuted chin folding itself into smile again as he looks round, "it is right that I should be humbled, it is hat I should be tried, it is right that I should be mortified, it is right that I l be corrected. I stumbled, on Sabbath last, when I thought with pride of ree hours' improving. The account is now favourably balanced: my creditor cepted a composition. O let us be joyful, joyful! O let us be joyful!"

at sensation on the part of Mrs. Snagsby.

ly friends," says Chadband, looking round him in conclusion, "I will not d with my young friend now. Will you come to-morrow, my young friend, quire of this good lady where I am to be found to deliver a discourse untoc nd will you come like the thirsty swallow upon the next day, and upon the ter that, and upon the day after that, and upon many pleasant days, to hear ures?" (This, with a cow-like lightness.)

whose immediate object seems to be to get away on any terms, gives a ag nod. Mr. Guppy then throws him a penny, and Mrs. Snagsby calls to r to see him safely out of the house. But, before he goes down-stairs, Mr. iby loads him with some broken meats from the table, which he carries away, ng in his arms.

Mr. Chadband—of whom the persecutors say that it is no wonder he should for any length of time uttering such abominable nonsense, but that the r rather is that he should ever leave off, having once the audacity to begin— into private life until he invests a little capital of supper in the oil-trade. oves on, through the long vacation, down to Blackfriars Bridge, where he a baking stony corner, wherein to settle to his repast.

d there he sits, munching and gnawing, and looking up at the great Cross e summit of St. Paul's Cathedral, glittering above a red and violet-tinted of smoke. From the boy's face one might suppose that sacred emblem to his eyes, the crowning confusion of the great, confused city; so golden, so up, so far out of his reach. There he sits, the sun going down, the river ag fast, the crowd flowing by him in two streams—everything moving on to purpose and to one end—until he is stirred up, and told to "move on" too.

CHAPTER XX.

A NEW LODGER.

long vacation saunters on towards term-time, like an idle river very leisurely ng down a flat country to the sea. Mr. Guppy saunters along with it con- lly. He has blunted the blade of his penknife, and broken the point off, by ag that instrument into his desk in every direction. Not that he bears the any ill-will, but he must do something, and it must be something of an un- ng nature, which will lay neither his physical nor his intellectual energies too heavy contribution. He finds that nothing agrees with him so well, as ke little gyrations on one leg of his stool, and stab his desk, and gape.

Kenge and Carboy are out of town, and the articled clerk has taken out a shooting license, and gone down to his father's, and Mr. Guppy's two fellow-stipendiaries are away on leave. Mr. Guppy, and Mr. Richard Carstone, divide the dignity of the office. But Mr. Carstone is for the time being established in Kenge's room, whereat Mr. Guppy chafes. So exceedingly, that he with biting sarcasm informs his mother, in the confidential moments when he sups with her off a lobster and lettuce, in the Old Street Road, that he is afraid the office is hardly good enough for swells, and that if he had known there was a swell coming, he would have got it painted.

Mr. Guppy suspects everybody who enters on the occupation of a stool in Kenge and Carboy's office, of entertaining, as a matter of course, sinister designs upon him. He is clear that every such person wants to depose him. If he be ever asked how, why, when, or wherefore, he shuts up one eye and shakes his head. On the strength of these profound views, he in the most ingenious manner takes infinite pains to counterplot, when there is no plot; and plays the deepest games of chess without any adversary.

It is a source of much gratification to Mr. Guppy, therefore, to find the newcomer constantly poring over the papers in Jarndyce and Jarndyce; for he well knows that nothing but confusion and failure can come of that. His satisfaction communicates itself to a third saunterer through the long vacation in Kenge and Carboy's office; to wit, Young Smallweed.

Whether Young Smallweed (metaphorically called Small and eke Chick Weed, as it were jocularly to express a fledgling,) was ever a boy, is much doubted in Lincoln's Inn. He is now something under fifteen, and an old limb of the law. He is facetiously understood to entertain a passion for a lady at a cigar-shop, in the neighbourhood of Chancery Lane, and for her sake to have broken off a contract with another lady, to whom he had been engaged some years. He is a town-made article, of small stature and weazen features; but may be perceived from a considerable distance by means of his very tall hat. To become a Guppy is the object of his ambition. He dresses at that gentleman (by whom he is patronized), talks at him, walks at him, founds himself entirely on him. He is honoured with Mr. Guppy's particular confidence, and occasionally advises him, from the deep wells of his experience, on difficult points in private life.

Mr. Guppy has been lolling out of window all the morning, after trying all the stools in succession and finding none of them easy, and after several times putting his head into the iron safe with a notion of cooling it. Mr. Smallweed has been twice dispatched for effervescent drinks, and has twice mixed them in the two official tumblers and stirred them up with the ruler. Mr. Guppy propounds, for Mr. Smallweed's consideration, the paradox that the more you drink the thirstier you are; and reclines his head upon the window-sill in a state of hopeless languor.

While thus looking out into the shade of Old Square, Lincoln's Inn, surveying the intolerable bricks and mortar, Mr. Guppy becomes conscious of a manly whisker emerging from the cloistered walk below, and turning itself up in the direction of his face. At the same time, a low whistle is wafted through the Inn, and a suppressed voice cries, "Hip! Gup-py!"

"Why, you don't mean it?" says Mr. Guppy, aroused. "Small! Here's Jobling!" Small's head looks out of window too, and nods to Jobling.

"Where have you sprung up from?" inquires Mr. Guppy.

"From the market-gardens down by Deptford. I can't stand it any longer. I must enlist. I say! I wish you'd lend me half-a-crown. Upon my soul I'm hungry."

Jobling looks hungry, and also has the appearance of having run to seed in the *market-gardens* down by Deptford.

"I say! Just throw out half-a-crown, if you have got one to spare. I want to get some dinner."

"Will you come and dine with me?" says Mr. Guppy, throwing out the coin, which Mr. Jobling catches neatly.

"How long should I have to hold out?" says Jobling.

"Not half an hour. I am only waiting here till the enemy goes," returns Mr. Guppy, butting inward with his head.

"What enemy?"

"A new one. Going to be articled. Will you wait?"

"Can you give a fellow anything to read in the meantime?" says Mr. Jobling.

Smallweed suggests the Law List. But Mr. Jobling declares, with much earnestness, that he "can't stand it."

"You shall have the paper," says Mr. Guppy. "He shall bring it down. But you had better not be seen about here. Sit on our staircase and read. It's a quiet place."

Jobling nods intelligence and acquiescence. The sagacious Smallweed supplies him with the newspaper, and occasionally drops his eye upon him from the landing as a precaution against his becoming disgusted with waiting, and making an untimely departure. At last the enemy retreats, and then Smallweed fetches Mr Jobling up.

"Well, and how are you?" says Mr. Guppy, shaking hands with him.

"So, so. How are you?"

Mr. Guppy replying that he is not much to boast of, Mr. Jobling ventures on the question, "How is *she*?" This Mr. Guppy resents as a liberty; retorting, "Jobling, there *are* chords in the human mind—" Jobling begs pardon.

"Any subject but that!" says Mr. Guppy, with a gloomy enjoyment of his injury. "For there *are* chords, Jobling—"

Mr. Jobling begs pardon again.

During this short colloquy, the active Smallweed, who is of the dinner party, has written in legal characters on a slip of paper, "Return immediately." This notification to all whom it may concern, he inserts in the letter-box; and then putting on the tall hat, at the angle of inclination at which Mr. Guppy wears his, informs his patron that they may now make themselves scarce.

Accordingly they betake themselves to a neighbouring dining-house, of the class known among its frequenters by the denomination Slap-Bang, where the waitress, a bouncing young female of forty, is supposed to have made some impression on the susceptible Smallweed; of whom it may be remarked that he is a weird changeling, to whom years are nothing. He stands precociously possessed of centuries of owlish wisdom. If he ever lay in a cradle, it seems as if he must have lain there in a tail-coat. He has an old, old eye, has Smallweed: and he drinks and smokes, in a monkeyish way; and his neck is stiff in his collar; and he is never to be taken in; and he knows all about it, whatever it is. In short, in his bringing up, he has been so nursed by Law and Equity that he has become a kind of fossil Imp, to account for whose terrestrial existence it is reported at the public offices that his father was John Doe, and his mother the only female member of the Roe family, also that his first long-clothes were made from a blue bag.

Into the dining-house, unaffected by the seductive show in the window, of artificially whitened cauliflowers and poultry, verdant baskets of peas, coolly blooming cucumbers, and joints ready for the spit, Mr. Smallweed leads the way. They know him there, and defer to him. He has his favourite box, he bespeaks all the papers, he is down upon bald patriarchs, who keep them more than two minutes afterwards. *It is of no use trying* him with anything less than a full-sized

"bread," or proposing to him any joint in cut, unless it is in the very best In the matter of gravy he is adamant.

Conscious of his elfin power, and submitting to his dread experience, Guppy consults him in the choice of that day's banquet; turning an appe look towards him as the waitress repeats the catalogue of viands, and su "What do *you* take, Chick?" Chick, out of the profundity of his artfuln preferring "veal and ham and French beans—And don't you forget the stuf Polly," (with an unearthly cock of his venerable eye); Mr. Guppy and Jobling give the like order. Three pint pots of half-and-half are superad Quickly the waitress returns, bearing what is apparently a model of the tow Babel, but what is really a pile of plates and flat tin dish-covers. Mr. Smallw approving of what is set before him, conveys intelligent benignity into his sm eye, and winks upon her. Then, amid a constant coming in, and going out, running about, and a clatter of crockery, and a rumbling up and down of machine which brings the nice cuts from the kitchen, and a shrill crying for n nice cuts down the speaking-pipe, and a shrill reckoning of the cost of nice that have been disposed of, and a general flush and steam of hot joints, cut uncut, and a considerably heated atmosphere in which the soiled knives and t cloths seem to break out spontaneously into eruptions of grease and blotch beer, the legal triumvirate appease their appetites.

Mr. Jobling is buttoned up closer than mere adornment might require. hat presents at the rims a peculiar appearance of a glistening nature, as if it been a favourite stall-promenade. The same phenomenon is visible on s parts of his coat, and particularly at the seams. He has the faded appearan a gentleman in embarrassed circumstances; even his light whiskers droop something of a shabby air.

His appetite is so vigorous, that it suggests spare living for some little back. He makes such a speedy end of his plate of veal and ham, bringing a close while his companions are yet midway in theirs, that Mr. Guppy pro another. "Thank you, Guppy," says Mr. Jobling, "I really don't know what I *will* take another."

Another being brought, he falls to with great good will.

Mr. Guppy takes silent notice of him at intervals, until he is half way thr this second plate and stops to take an enjoying pull at his pint pot of half-half (also renewed), and stretches out his legs and rubs his hands. Behol him in which glow of contentment, Mr. Guppy says:

"You are a man again, Tony!"

"Well, not quite, yet," says Mr. Jobling. "Say, just born."

"Will you take any other vegetables? Grass? Peas? Summer cabbag

"Thank you, Guppy," says Mr. Jobling. "I really don't know but wi *will* take summer cabbage."

Order given; with the sarcastic addition (from Mr. Smallweed) of "Wa slugs, Polly!" And cabbage produced.

"I am growing up, Guppy," says Mr. Jobling, plying his knife and fork w relishing steadiness.

"Glad to hear it."

"In fact, I have just turned into my teens," says Mr. Jobling.

He says no more until he has performed his task, which he achieves as M Guppy and Smallweed finish theirs; thus getting over the ground in exce style, and beating those two gentlemen easily by a veal and ham and a cabb

"Now, Small," says Mr. Guppy, "what would you recommend about past

"Marrow puddings," says Mr. Smallweed, instantly.

"*Aye, aye!*" cries Mr. Jobling, with an arch look. "You're there

you? Thank you, Mr. Guppy, I don't know but what I *will* take a marrow pudding."

Three marrow puddings being produced, Mr. Jobling adds, in a pleasant humour, that he is coming of age fast. To these succeed, by command of Mr. Smallweed, "three Cheshires;" and to those, "three small rums." This apex of the entertainment happily reached, Mr. Jobling puts up his legs on the carpeted seat (having his own side of the box to himself), leans against the wall, and says, "I am grown up, now, Guppy. I have arrived at maturity."

"What do you think, now," says Mr. Guppy, "about—you don't mind Smallweed?"

"Not the least in the world. I have the pleasure of drinking his good health."

"Sir, to you!" says Mr. Smallweed.

"I was saying, what do you think *now*," pursues Mr. Guppy, "of enlisting?"

"Why, what I may think after dinner," returns Mr. Jobling, "is one thing, my dear Guppy, and what I may think before dinner is another thing. Still, even after dinner, I ask myself the question, What am I to do? How am I to live? Ill fo manger, you know," says Mr. Jobling, pronouncing that word as if he meant a necessary fixture in an English stable. "Ill fo manger. That's the French saying, and mangering is as necessary to me as it is to a Frenchman. Or more so."

Mr. Smallweed is decidedly of opinion "much more so."

"If any man had told me," pursues Jobling "even so lately as when you and I had the frisk down in Lincolnshire, Guppy, and drove over to see that house at Castle Wold ——"

Mr. Smallweed corrects him—Chesney Wold.

"Chesney Wold. (I thank my honourable friend for that cheer.) If any man had told me, then, that I should be as hard up at the present time as I literally find myself, I should have—well, I should have pitched into him," says Mr. Jobling, taking a little rum-and-water with an air of desperate resignation; "I should have let fly at his head."

"Still, Tony, you were on the wrong side of the post then," remonstrates Mr. Guppy. "You were talking about nothing else in the gig."

"Guppy," says Mr. Jobling, "I will not deny it. I was on the wrong side of the post. But I trusted to things coming round."

That very popular trust in fat things coming round! Not in their being beaten round, or worked round, but in their "coming" round! As though a lunatic should trust in the world's "coming" triangular!

"I had confident expectations that things would come round and be all square," says Mr. Jobling, with some vagueness of expression, and perhaps of meaning, too. "But I was disappointed. They never did. And when it came to creditors making rows at the office, and to people that the office dealt with making complaints about dirty trifles of borrowed money, why there was an end of that connexion. And of any new professional connexion, too; for if I was to give a reference to-morrow, it would be mentioned, and would sew me up. Then, what's a fellow to do? I have been keeping out of the way, and living cheap, down about the market-gardens; but what's the use of living cheap when you have got no money? You might as well live dear."

"Better," Mr. Smallweed thinks.

"Certainly. It's the fashionable way; and fashion and whiskers have been my weaknesses, and I don't care who knows it," says Mr. Jobling. "They are great weaknesses—Damme, sir, they are great. Well!" proceeds Mr. Jobling, after a defiant visit to his rum-and-water, "what can a fellow do, I ask you, but enlist?"

Mr. Guppy comes *more fully into* the conversation, to state what, in his opinion,

a fellow can do. His manner is the gravely impressive manner of a man who has not committed himself in life, otherwise than as he has become the victim of a tender sorrow of the heart.

"Jobling," says Mr. Guppy, "myself and our mutual friend Smallweed——"

(Mr. Smallweed modestly observes "Gentlemen both!" and drinks.)

"Have had a little conversation on this matter more than once, since you——"

"Say, got the sack!" cries Mr. Jobling, bitterly. "Say it, Guppy. You mean it."

"N-o-o! Left the Inn," Mr. Smallweed delicately suggests.

"Since you left the Inn, Jobling," says Mr. Guppy; "and I have mentioned to our mutual friend Smallweed, a plan I have lately thought of proposing. You know Snagsby the stationer?"

"I know there is such a stationer," returns Mr. Jobling. "He was not ours, and I am not acquainted with him."

"He *is* ours, Jobling, and I *am* acquainted with him," Mr. Guppy retorts. "Well, sir! I have lately become better acquainted with him, through some accidental circumstances that have made me a visitor of his in private life. Those circumstances it is not necessary to offer in argument. They may—or they may not—have some reference to a subject, which may—or may not—have cast its shadow on my existence."

As it is Mr. Guppy's perplexing way, with boastful misery to tempt his particular friends into this subject, and the moment they touch it, to turn on them with that trenchant severity about the chords in the human mind; both Mr. Jobling and Mr. Smallweed decline the pitfall, by remaining silent.

"Such things may be," repeats Mr. Guppy, "or they may not be. They are no part of the case. It is enough to mention, that both Mr. and Mrs. Snagsby are very willing to oblige me; and that Snagsby has, in busy times, a good deal of copying work to give out. He has all Tulkinghorn's, and an excellent business besides. I believe, if our mutual friend Smallweed were put into the box, he could prove this?"

Mr. Smallweed nods, and appears greedy to be sworn.

"Now, gentlemen of the jury," says Mr. Guppy, "—I mean, now Jobling—you may say this is a poor prospect of a living. Granted. But it's better than nothing, and better than enlistment. You want time. There must be time for these late affairs to blow over. You might live through it on much worse terms than by writing for Snagsby."

Mr. Jobling is about to interrupt, when the sagacious Smallweed checks him with a dry cough, and the words, "Hem! Shakspeare!"

"There are two branches to this subject, Jobling," says Mr. Guppy. "That is the first. I come to the second. You know Krook, the Chancellor, across the lane. Come, Jobling," says Mr. Guppy, in his encouraging cross-examination-tone, "I think you know Krook, the Chancellor, across the lane?"

"I know him by sight," says Mr. Jobling.

"You know him by sight. Very well. And you know little Flite?"

"Everybody knows her," says Mr. Jobling.

"Everybody knows her. *Very* well. Now it has been one of my duties of late, to pay Flite a certain weekly allowance, deducting from it the amount of her weekly rent: which I have paid (in consequence of instructions I have received) to Krook himself, regularly in her presence. This has brought me into communication with Krook, and into a knowledge of his house and his habits. I know he has a room to let. You may live there at a very low charge, under any name you like; as quietly as if you were a hundred miles off. He'll ask no questions; *and would accept* you as a tenant, at a word from me—before the clock strikes, if

And I tell you another thing, Jobling," says Mr. Guppy, who has
wered his voice, and become familiar again, "he's an extraordinary
always rummaging among a litter of papers, and grubbing away at
mself to read and write; without getting on a bit, as it seems to me.
st extraordinary old chap, sir. I don't know but what it might be
ow's while to look him up a bit."
n't mean —— ?" Mr. Jobling begins.
," returns Mr. Guppy, shrugging his shoulders with becoming
that *I* can't make him out. I appeal to our mutual friend Smallweed
has or has not heard me remark, that I can't make him out."
lweed bears the concise testimony, "A few!"
seen something of the profession, and something of life, Tony," says
, "and it's seldom I can't make a man out, more or less. But such
as this; so deep, so sly, and secret (though I don't believe he is ever
ver came across. Now, he must be precious old, you know, and he
ul about him, and he is reported to be immensely rich; and whether
ggler, or a receiver, or an unlicensed pawnbroker, or a money-lender—
I have thought likely at different times—it might pay you to knock
knowledge of him. I don't see why you shouldn't go in for it, when
lse suits."
ing, Mr. Guppy, and Mr. Smallweed, all lean their elbows on the
heir chins upon their hands, and look at the ceiling. After a time,
k, slowly lean back, put their hands in their pockets, and look at one

l the energy I once possessed, Tony!" says Mr. Guppy, with a sigh.
are chords in the human mind ——"
g the remainder of the desolate sentiment in rum-and-water, Mr.
ludes by resigning the adventure to Tony Jobling, and informing him
the vacation and while things are slack, his purse, "as far as three or
n five pound goes," will be at his disposal. "For never shall it be
uppy adds with emphasis, "that William Guppy turned his back upon

r part of the proposal is so directly to the purpose, that Mr. Jobling
motion, "Guppy, my trump, your fist!" Mr. Guppy presents it,
obling, my boy, there it is!" Mr. Jobling returns. "Guppy, we
pals now for some years!" Mr. Guppy replies, "Jobling, we have."
n shake hands, and Mr. Jobling adds in a feeling manner, "Thank you,
on't know but what I *will* take another glass for old acquaintance sake."
s last lodger died there," observes Mr. Guppy, in an incidental way.
though!" says Mr. Jobling.
was a verdict. Accidental death. You don't mind that?"
ays Mr. Jobling, "I don't mind it; but he might as well have died
else. It's devilish odd that he need go and die at *my* place!" Mr.
te resents this liberty; several times returning to it with such remarks
are places enough to die in, I should think!" or, "He wouldn't have
ing at *his* place, I dare say!"
, the compact being virtually made, Mr. Guppy proposes to dispatch
Smallweed to ascertain if Mr. Krook is at home, as in that case they
ete the negotiation without delay. Mr. Jobling approving, Small-
imself under the tall hat and conveys it out of the dining-rooms in
manner. He soon returns with the intelligence that Mr. Krook is at
that he has seen him through the shop-door, sitting in the back pre-
ing, "like one o'clock."

"Then I'll pay," says Mr. Guppy, "and we'll go and see him. Sm will it be?"

Mr. Smallweed, compelling the attendance of the waitress with one his eyelash, instantly replies as follows: "Four veals and hams is three, potatoes is three and four, and one summer cabbage is three and six, a marrows is four and six, and six breads is five, and three Cheshires is three, and four half-pints of half-and-half is six and three, and four sma eight and three, and three Pollys is eight and six. Eight and six i sovereign, Polly, and eighteenpence out!"

Not at all excited by these stupendous calculations, Smallweed dis friends with a cool nod, and remains behind to take a little admiring Polly, as opportunity may serve, and to read the daily papers: which o large in proportion to himself, shorn of his hat, that when he holds up t to run his eye over the columns, he seems to have retired for the nigh have disappeared under the bedclothes.

Mr. Guppy and Mr. Jobling repair to the rag and bottle shop, where Krook still sleeping like one o'clock; that is to say, breathing stertor his chin upon his breast, and quite insensible to any external sounds, a gentle shaking. On the table beside him, among the usual lumber, empty gin-bottle and a glass. The unwholesome air is so stained with t that even the green eyes of the cat upon her shelf, as they open and glimmer on the visitors, look drunk.

"Hold up here!" says Mr. Guppy, giving the relaxed figure of the another shake. "Mr. Krook! Halloa, sir!"

But it would seem as easy to wake a bundle of old clothes, with a heat smouldering in it. "Did you ever see such a stupor as he falls tween drink and sleep?" says Mr. Guppy.

"If this is his regular sleep," returns Jobling, rather alarmed, "I long time one of these days, I am thinking."

"It's always more like a fit than a nap," says Mr. Guppy, shaking h "Halloa, your lordship! Why he might be robbed, fifty times over your eyes!"

After much ado, he opens them, but without appearing to see his v any other objects. Though he crosses one leg on another, and folds i and several times closes and opens his parched lips, he seems to all i purposes as insensible as before.

"He is alive, at any rate," says Mr. Guppy. "How are you, my Lo cellor. I have brought a friend of mine, sir, on a little matter of busine

The old man still sits, often smacking his dry lips without the least ness. After some minutes, he makes an attempt to rise. They help hi he staggers against the wall, and stares at them.

"How do you do, Mr. Krook?" says Mr. Guppy, in some dis "How do you do, sir? You are looking charming, Mr. Krook. I hop pretty well?"

The old man, in aiming a purposeless blow at Mr. Guppy, or at nothi

"What? You've been a-trying to do it, have you?" says the suspicious Krook.

"Only a little," Mr. Guppy explains.

The old man's eye resting on the empty bottle, he takes it up, examines it, and slowly tilts it upside down.

"I say!" he cries, like the Hobgoblin in the story. "Somebody 's been making free here!"

"I assure you we found it so," says Mr. Guppy. "Would you allow me to get it filled for you?"

"Yes, certainly I would!" cries Krook, in high glee. "Certainly I would! Don't mention it! Get it filled next door—Sol's Arms—the Lord Chancellor's fourteenpenny. Bless you, they know *me!*"

He so presses the empty bottle upon Mr. Guppy, that that gentleman, with a nod to his friend, accepts the trust, and hurries out and hurries in again with the bottle filled. The old man receives it in his arms like a beloved grandchild, and gats it tenderly.

"But, I say!" he whispers, with his eyes screwed up, after tasting it, "this ain't the Lord Chancellor's fourteenpenny. This is eighteenpenny!"

"I thought you might like that better," says Mr. Guppy.

"You're a nobleman, sir," returns Krook, with another taste—and his hot breath seems to come towards them like a flame. "You're a baron of the land."

Taking advantage of this auspicious moment, Mr. Guppy presents his friend under the impromptu name of Mr. Weevle, and states the object of their visit. Krook with his bottle under his arm (he never gets beyond a certain point of either drunkenness or sobriety), takes time to survey his proposed lodger, and seems to approve of him. "You'd like to see the room, young man?" he says. "Ah! It's a good room! Been whitewashed. Been cleaned down with soft soap and soda. Hi! It's worth twice the rent; letting alone my company when you want it, and such a cat to keep the mice away."

Commending the room after this manner, the old man takes them up-stairs, where indeed they do find it cleaner than it used to be, and also containing some old articles of furniture which he has dug up from his inexhaustible stores. The terms are easily concluded—for the Lord Chancellor cannot be hard on Mr. Guppy, associated as he is with Kenge and Carboy, Jarndyce and Jarndyce, and other famous claims on his professional consideration—and it is agreed that Mr. Weevle shall take possession on the morrow. Mr. Weevle and Mr. Guppy then repair to Cook's Court, Cursitor Street, where the personal introduction of the former to Mr. Snagsby is effected, and (more important) the vote and interest of Mrs. Snagsby are secured. They then report progress to the eminent Smallweed, waiting at the office in his tall hat for that purpose, and separate; Mr. Guppy explaining that he would terminate his little entertainment by standing treat at the play, but that there are chords in the human mind which would render it a hollow mockery.

On the morrow, in the dusk of evening, Mr. Weevle modestly appears at Krook's, by no means incommoded with luggage, and establishes himself in his new lodging; where the two eyes in the shutters stare at him in his sleep, as if they were full of wonder. On the following day Mr. Weevle, who is a handy good-for-nothing kind of young fellow, borrows a needle and thread of Miss Flite, and a hammer of his landlord, and goes to work devising apologies for window-curtains, and knocking up apologies for shelves, and hanging up his two teacups, milkpot, and crockery sundries on a pennyworth of little hooks, like a shipwrecked sailor making the best of it.

But what Mr. Weevle prizes most, of all his few possessions (next after his light whiskers for which he has an attachment that only whiskers can awaken in the

breast of man), is a choice collection of copper-plate impressions from th national work, The Divinities of Albion, or Galaxy Gallery of British Be presenting ladies of title and fashion in every variety of smirk that art, co with capital, is capable of producing. With these magnificent portraits, thily confined in a band-box during his seclusion among the market-gard decorates his apartment; and as the Galaxy Gallery of British Beauty wea variety of fancy dress, plays every variety of musical instrument, fondle variety of dog, ogles every variety of prospect, and is backed up by every of flower-pot and balustrade, the result is very imposing.

But, fashion is Mr. Weevle's, as it was Tony Jobling's weakness. To yesterday's paper from the Sol's Arms of an evening, and read about the b and distinguished meteors that are shooting across the fashionable sky in direction, is unspeakable consolation to him. To know what member o brilliant and distinguished circle accomplished the brilliant and distinguish of joining it yesterday, or contemplates the no less brilliant and distinguish of leaving it to-morrow, gives him a thrill of joy. To be informed what laxy Gallery of British Beauty is about, and means to be about, and what marriages are on the tapis, and what Galaxy rumours are in circulation, is come acquainted with the most glorious destinies of mankind. Mr. Weevle from this intelligence, to the Galaxy portraits implicated; and seems to kn originals, and to be known of them.

For the rest he is a quiet lodger, full of handy shifts and devices as befo tioned, able to cook and clean for himself as well as to carpenter, and dev social inclinations after the shades of evening have fallen on the court. A times, when he is not visited by Mr. Guppy, or by a small light in his quenched in a dark hat, he comes out of his dull room—where he has it the deal wilderness of desk bespattered with a rain of ink—and talks to or is "very free," as they call it in the court, commendingly, with any posed for conversation. Wherefore, Mrs. Piper, who leads the court, is t to offer two remarks to Mrs. Perkins: Firstly, that if her Johnny was whiskers, she could wish 'em to be identically like that young man's; and s Mark my words, Mrs. Perkins, ma'am, and don't you be surprised Lord bl if that young man comes in at last for old Krook's money!

CHAPTER XXI.

THE SMALLWEED FAMILY.

In a rather ill-favoured and ill-savoured neighbourhood, though one of t grounds bears the name of Mount Pleasant, the Elfin Smallweed, christe tholomew, and known on the domestic hearth as Bart, passes that limited of his time on which the office and its contingencies have no claim. He a little narrow street, always solitary, shady, and sad, closely bricked sides like a tomb, but where there yet lingers the stump of an old forest tre flavour is about as fresh and natural as the Smallweed smack of youth.

There has been only one child in the Smallweed family for several ge Little old men and women there have been, but no child, until Mr. Sm grandmother, now living, became weak in her intellect, and fell (toe the into a childish state. With such infantine graces as a total [illegible] of wh memory, understanding and interest, and an eternal [illegible]

the fire and into it, Mr. Smallweed's grandmother has undoubtedly brightened the family.

Mr. Smallweed's grandfather is likewise of the party. He is in a helpless condition as to his lower, and nearly so as to his upper limbs; but his mind is unimpaired. It holds, as well as it ever held, the first four rules of arithmetic, and a certain small collection of the hardest facts. In respect of ideality, reverence, wonder, and other such phrenological attributes, it is no worse off than it used to be. Everything that Mr. Smallweed's grandfather ever put away in his mind was a grub at first, and is a grub at last. In all his life he has never bred a single butterfly.

The father of this pleasant grandfather, of the neighbourhood of Mount Pleasant, was a horny-skinned, two-legged, money-getting species of spider, who spun webs to catch unwary flies, and retired into holes until they were entrapped. The name of this old pagan's God was Compound Interest. He lived for it, married it, died of it. Meeting with a heavy loss in an honest little enterprise in which all the loss was intended to have been on the other side, he broke something—something necessary to his existence; therefore it couldn't have been his heart—and made an end of his career. As his character was not good, and he had been bred at a Charity School, in a complete course, according to question and answer, of those ancient people the Amorites and Hittites, he was frequently quoted as an example of the failure of education.

His spirit shone through his son, to whom he had always preached of "going out" early in life, and whom he made a clerk in a sharp scrivener's office at twelve years old. There, the young gentleman improved his mind, which was of a lean and anxious character; and, developing the family gifts, gradually elevated himself into the discounting profession. Going out early in life, and marrying late, as his father had done before him, he too begat a lean and anxious-minded son; who, in his turn, going out early in life and marrying late, became the father of Bartholomew and Judith Smallweed, twins. During the whole time consumed in the slow growth of this family tree, the house of Smallweed, always early to go out and late to marry, has strengthened itself in its practical character, has discarded all amusements, discountenanced all story-books, fairy tales, fictions, and fables, and banished all levities whatsoever. Hence the gratifying fact, that it has had no child born to it, and that the complete little men and women whom it has produced, have been observed to bear a likeness to old monkeys with something depressing on their minds.

At the present time, in the dark little parlour certain feet below the level of the street—a grim, hard, uncouth parlour, only ornamented with the coarsest of baize table-covers, and the hardest of sheet-iron tea-trays, and offering in its decorative character no bad allegorical representation of Grandfather Smallweed's mind—seated in two black horse-hair porter's chairs, one on each side of the fire-place, the superannuated Mr. and Mrs. Smallweed while away the rosy hours. On the stove are a couple of trivets for the pots and kettles which it is Grandfather Smallweed's usual occupation to watch, and projecting from the chimney-piece between them is a sort of brass gallows for roasting, which he also superintends when it is in action. Under the venerable Mr. Smallweed's seat, and guarded by his spindle legs, is a drawer in his chair, reported to contain property to a fabulous amount. Beside him is a spare cushion, with which he is always provided, in order that he may have something to throw at the venerable partner of his respected age whenever she makes an allusion to money—a subject on which he is particularly sensitive.

"And where's Bart?" [illegible] Smallweed inquires of Judy, Bart's twin-sister.

"He an't come in yet," says Judy.

"It's his tea-time, isn't it?"

"No."

"How much do you mean to say it wants then?"

"Ten minutes."

"Hey?"

"Ten minutes."—(Loud on the part of Judy.)

"Ho!" says Grandfather Smallweed. "Ten minutes."

Grandmother Smallweed, who has been mumbling and shaking her [illegible]ivets, hearing figures mentioned, connects them with money, and scr[illegible] horrible old parrot without any plumage, "Ten ten-pound notes!"

Grandfather Smallweed immediately throws the cushion at her.

"Drat you, be quiet!" says the good old man.

The effect of this act of jaculation is twofold. It not only doubl[illegible] Smallweed's head against the side of her porter's chair, and causes her[illegible] when extricated by her grand-daughter, a highly unbecoming state of [illegible] necessary exertion recoils on Mr. Smallweed himself, whom it throw[illegible] *his* porter's chair, like a broken puppet. The excellent old gentlem[illegible] these times, a mere clothes-bag with a black skull-cap on the top of [illegible] present a very animated appearance, until he has undergone the two o[illegible] the hands of his grand-daughter, of being shaken up like a great [illegible] [illegible] Black Serjeant, Death.

Judy [illegible]

[illegible]

lo you mean?" says Judy.
om Grandfather Smallweed.
lo you mean?"
s a spring in Grandmother Smallweed, who, chuckling, as usual, at
es—"Over the water! Charley over the water, Charley over the
ie water to Charley, Charley over the water, over the water to
becomes quite energetic about it. Grandfather looks at the cushion,
fficiently recovered his late exertion.
says, when there is silence—"if that's her name. She eats a deal.
tter to allow her for her keep."
her brother's wink, shakes her head, and purses up her mouth into
ying it.
rns the old man. "Why not?"
it sixpence a-day, and we can do it for less," says Judy.

rs with a nod of deepest meaning, and calls, as she scrapes the
loaf with every precaution against waste, and cuts it into slices,
, where are you?" Timidly obedient to the summons, a little girl
on and a large bonnet, with her hands covered with soap and water,
g brush in one of them, appears, and curtseys.
k are you about now?" says Judy, making an ancient snap at her,
rp old beldame.
ning the up-stairs back room, miss," replies Charley.
do it thoroughly, and don't loiter. Shirking won't do for me.
Go along!" cries Judy, with a stamp upon the ground. "You
trouble than you're worth, by half."
ere matron, as she returns to her task of scraping the butter and
read, falls the shadow of her brother, looking in at the window.
ife and loaf in hand, she opens the street-door.
art!" says Grandfather Smallweed. "Here you are, hey?"
," says Bart.
g with your friend again, Bart?"

his expense, Bart?"
again.
ht. Live at his expense as much as you can, and take warning by
mple. That's the use of such a friend. The only use you can put
the venerable sage.
n, without receiving this good counsel as dutifully as he might,
h all such acceptance as may lie in a slight wink and a nod, and takes
tea-table. The four old faces then hover over teacups, like a com-
y cherubim: Mrs. Smallweed perpetually twitching her head and
he trivets, and Mr. Smallweed requiring to be repeatedly shaken up
ick draught.
' says the good old gentleman, reverting to his lesson of wisdom.
advice as your father would have given you, Bart. You never saw
More's the pity. He was my true son." Whether it is intended to
iat he was particularly pleasant to look at, on that account, does not

y true son," repeats the old gentleman, folding his bread-and-butter
' a good accountant, and died fifteen years ago."
reed, following her usual instinct, breaks out with "Fifteen hundred
en hundred *pound in a black box*, fifteen hundred pound locked up,

fifteen hundred pound put away and hid!" Her worthy husband, setting bread-and-butter, immediately discharges the cushion at her, crushes he the side of her chair, and falls back in his own, overpowered. His ap after visiting Mrs. Smallweed with one of these admonitions, is p impressive and not wholly prepossessing; firstly, because the exertion twists his black skull cap over one eye and gives him an air of goblin ra secondly, because he mutters violent imprecations against Mrs. Smallw thirdly, because the contrast between those powerful expressions and his figure is suggestive of a baleful old malignant, who would be very wic could. All this, however, is so common in the Smallweed family circ produces no impression. The old gentleman is merely shaken, and has h feathers beaten up; the cushion is restored to its usual place beside him old lady, perhaps with her cap adjusted, and perhaps not, is planted in again, ready to be bowled down like a ninepin.

Some time elapses, in the present instance, before the old gentlema ciently cool to resume his discourse; and even then he mixes it up wi edifying expletives addressed to the unconscious partner of his bosom, communication with nothing on earth but the trivets. As thus:

"If your father, Bart, had lived longer, he might have been worth money—you brimstone chatterer!—but just as he was beginning to bu house that he had been making the foundations for, through many a jade of a magpie, jackdaw, and poll-parrot, what do you mean!—he t died of a low fever, always being a sparing and a spare man, full of bus —I should like to throw a cat at you instead of a cushion, and I will make such a confounded fool of yourself!—and your mother, who was woman as dry as a chip, just dwindled away like touchwood after you were born—You are an old pig. You are a brimstone pig. You're swine!"

Judy, not interested in what she has often heard, begins to collect various tributary streams of tea, from the bottoms of cups and saucers an bottom of the teapot, for the little charwoman's evening meal. In lil she gets together, in the iron bread-basket, as many outside fragments down heels of loaves as the rigid economy of the house has left in existe

"But, your father and me were partners, Bart," says the old gentlem when I am gone, you and Judy will have all there is. It's rare for you you went out early in life—Judy to the flower business, and you to the l won't want to spend it. You'll get your living without it, and put n When I am gone, Judy will go back to the flower business, and you'll st the law."

One might infer, from Judy's appearance, that her business rather la thorns than the flowers; but, she has, in her time, been apprenticed to t mystery of artificial flower-making. A close observer might perhaps d in her eye and her brother's, when their venerable grandsire anticipates gone, some little impatience to know when he may be going, and som opinion that it is time he went.

"Now, if everybody has done," says Judy, completing her preparat have that girl in to her tea. She would never leave off, if she took it by the kitchen."

Charley is accordingly introduced, and, under a heavy fire of eyes, sit her basin and a Druidical ruin of bread-and-butter. In the active super of this young person, Judy Smallweed appears to attain a perfectly geol and to date from the remotest periods. Her systematic manner of flying *pouncing on her,* with or without pretence, whether or no, is wonderful

an accomplishment in the art of girl-driving, seldom reached by the oldest practitioners.

"Now, don't stare about you all the afternoon," cries Judy, shaking her head and stamping her foot as she happens to catch the glance which has been previously sounding the basin of tea, "but take your victuals and get back to your work."

"Yes, miss," says Charley.

"Don't say yes," returns Miss Smallweed, "for I know what you girls are. Do it without saying it, and then I may begin to believe you."

Charley swallows a great gulp of tea in token of submission, and so disperses the Druidical ruins that Miss Smallweed charges her not to gormandize, which "in you girls," she observes, is disgusting. Charley might find some more difficulty in meeting her views on the general subject of girls, but for a knock at the door.

"See who it is, and don't chew when you open it!" cries Judy.

The object of her attentions withdrawing for the purpose, Miss Smallweed takes that opportunity of jumbling the remainder of the bread-and-butter together, and launching two or three dirty teacups into the ebb-tide of the basin of tea: as a hint that she considers the eating and drinking terminated.

"Now! Who is it, and what's wanted?" says the snappish Judy.

It is one "Mr. George," it appears. Without other announcement or ceremony, Mr. George walks in.

"Whew!" says Mr. George. "You are hot here. Always a fire, eh? Well! Perhaps you do right to get used to one." Mr. George makes the latter remark to himself, as he nods to Grandfather Smallweed.

"Ho! It's you!" cries the old gentleman. "How de do? How de do?"

"Middling," replies Mr. George, taking a chair. "Your grand-daughter I have had the honour of seeing before: my service to you, miss."

"This is my grandson," says Grandfather Smallweed. "You ha'n't seen him before. He is in the law, and not much at home."

"My service to him, too! He is like his sister. He is very like his sister. He is devilish like his sister," says Mr. George, laying a great and not altogether complimentary stress on his last adjective.

"And how does the world use you, Mr. George?" Grandfather Smallweed inquires, slowly rubbing his legs.

"Pretty much as usual. Like a football."

He is a swarthy brown man of fifty; well-made, and good looking; with crisp dark hair, bright eyes, and a broad chest. His sinewy and powerful hands, as sunburnt as his face, have evidently been used to a pretty rough life. What is curious about him is, that he sits forward on his chair as if he were, from long habit, allowing space for some dress or accoutrements that he has altogether laid aside. His step too is measured and heavy, and would go well with a weighty clash and jingle of spurs. He is close-shaved now, but his mouth is set as if his upper lip had been for years familiar with a great moustache; and his manner of occasionally laying the open palm of his broad brown hand upon it, is to the same effect. Altogether, one might guess Mr. George to have been a trooper once upon a time.

A special contrast Mr. George makes to the Smallweed family. Trooper was never yet billeted upon a household more unlike him. It is a broadsword to an oyster knife. His developed figure, and their stunted forms; his large manner, filling any amount of room, and their little narrow pinched ways; his sounding voice, and their sharp-pane tones; are in the strongest and the strangest opposition. As he sits *in the middle of the* guttering parlour, leaning a little forward, with

his hands upon his thighs and his elbows squared, he looks as th
remained there long, he would absorb into himself the whole fam
whole four-roomed house, extra little back-kitchen and all.

"Do you rub your legs to rub life into 'em?" he asks of Grandfa
weed, after looking round the room.

"Why, it's partly a habit, Mr. George, and—yes—it partly helps the
he replies.

"The cir-cu-la-tion!" repeats Mr. George, folding his arms upon hi
seeming to become two sizes larger. "Not much of that, I should thi

"Truly I'm old, Mr. George," says Grandfather Smallweed. "But
my years. I'm older than *her*," nodding at his wife, "and see wha
You're a brimstone chatterer!" with a sudden revival of his late hosti

"Unlucky old soul!" says Mr. George, turning his head in the
"Don't scold the old lady. Look at her here, with her poor cap half o
and her poor hair all in a muddle. Hold up, ma'am. That's better.
are! Think of your mother, Mr. Smallweed," says Mr. George, com
his seat from assisting her, "if your wife an't enough."

"I suppose you were an excellent son, Mr. George?" the old man hints

The colour of Mr. George's face rather deepens, as he replies; "I
wasn't."

"I am astonished at it."

"So am I. I ought to have been a good son, and I think I meant t
one. But I wasn't. I was a thundering bad son, that's the long and
it, and never was a credit to anybody."

"Surprising!" cries the old man.

"However," Mr. George resumes, "the less said about it, the l
Come! You know the agreement. Always a pipe out of the two
terest! (Bosh! It's all correct. You needn't be afraid to order the p
the new bill, and here's the two months' interest-money, and a devil-
scrape it is to get it together in my business)."

Mr. George sits, with his arms folded, consuming the family and
while Grandfather Smallweed is assisted by Judy to two black leathern
a locked bureau; in one of which he secures the document he has ju
and from the other takes another similar document which he hands to
who twists it up for a pipe-light. As the old man inspects, through
every up-stroke and down-stroke of both documents, before he release
their leathern prison; and as he counts the money three times over,
Judy to say every word she utters at least twice, and is as tremulo
speech and action as it is possible to be; this business is a long time
When it is quite concluded, and not before, he disengages his raveno
fingers from it, and answers Mr. George's last remark by saying, "Afr
the pipe? We are not so mercenary as that, sir. Judy, see directly
and the glass of cold brandy-and-water for Mr. George."

The sportive twins, who have been looking straight before them al
except when they have been engrossed by the black leathern cases, reti
generally disdainful of the visitor, but leaving him to the old man, as
cubs might leave a traveller to the parental bear.

"And there you sit, I suppose, all the day long, eh?" says Mr. G
folded arms.

"Just so, just so," the old man nods.

"And don't you occupy yourself at all?"

"I watch the fire—and the boiling and the roasting—"

"*When there is* any," says Mr. George, with great expression.

t so. When there is any."
n't you read, or get read to?"
old man shakes his head with sharp sly triumph. "No, no. We have never
aders in our family. It don't pay. Stuff. Idleness. Folly. No, no!"
ere's not much to choose between your two states," says the visitor, in a
low for the old man's dull hearing, as he looks from him to the old
and back again. "I say!" in a louder voice.
ear you."
u'll sell me up at last, I suppose, when I am a day in arrear."
dear friend!" cries Grandfather Smallweed, stretching out both hands
ace him. "Never! Never, my dear friend! But my friend in the city
got to lend you the money—*he* might!"
you can't answer for him?" says Mr. George; finishing the inquiry, in
er key, with the words "you lying old rascal!"
dear friend, he is not to be depended on. I wouldn't trust him. He
ve his bond, my dear friend."
vil doubt him," says Mr. George. Charley appearing with a tray, on
are the pipe, a small paper of tobacco, and the brandy-and-water, he asks
How do you come here! you haven't got the family face."
oes out to work, sir," returns Charley.
trooper (if trooper he be or have been) takes her bonnet off, with a light
for so strong a hand, and pats her on the head. "You give the house
a wholesome look. It wants a bit of youth as much as it wants fresh
Then he dismisses her, lights his pipe, and drinks to Mr. Smallweed's
the city—the one solitary flight of that esteemed old gentleman's ima-
.
you think he might be hard upon me, eh?"
hink he might—I am afraid he would. I have known him do it," says
ther Smallweed, incautiously, "twenty times."
tiously, because his stricken better-half, who has been dozing over the
some time, is instantly aroused and jabbers "Twenty thousand pounds,
twenty-pound notes in a money-box, twenty guineas, twenty million
per cent. twenty—" and is then cut short by the flying cushion, which the
to whom this singular experiment appears to be a novelty, snatches from
as it crushes her in the usual manner.
u're a brimstone idiot. You're a scorpion—a brimstone scorpion! You're
ring toad. You're a chattering clattering broomstick witch, that ought to
!" gasps the old man, prostrate in his chair. "My dear friend, will
ke me up a little?"
George, who has been looking first at one of them and then at the other,
were demented, takes his venerable acquaintance by the throat on receiv-
request, and dragging him upright in his chair as easily as if he were a
pears in two minds whether or no to shake all future power of cushioning
him, and shake him into his grave. Resisting the temptation, but agitat-
violently enough to make his head roll like a harlequin's, he puts him
down in his chair again, and adjusts his skull cap with such a rub, that
man winks with both eyes for a minute afterwards.
Lord!" gasps Mr. Smallweed, "That'll do. Thank you, my dear friend,
o. O dear me, I'm out of breath. O Lord!" And Mr. Smallweed says
without evident apprehensions of his dear friend, who still stands over him
larger than ever.
darming presence, however, gradually subsides into its chair, and falls to
in long puffs; consoling itself with the philosophical reflection, "The

name of your friend in the city begins with a D, comrade, and you're al respecting the bond."

"Did you speak, Mr. George?" inquires the old man.

The trooper shakes his head; and leaning forward with his right elb right knee and his pipe supported in that hand, while his other hand, his left leg, squares his left elbow in a martial manner, continues to smok while he looks at Mr. Smallweed with grave attention, and now and the cloud of smoke away, in order that he may see him the more clearly.

"I take it," he says, making just as much and as little change in his p will enable him to reach the glass to his lips, with a round, full action, am the only man alive (or dead either), that gets the value of a pipe out

"Well!" returns the old man, "it's true that I don't see company, M and that I don't treat. I can't afford to it. But as you, in your plea made your pipe a condition——"

"Why, it's not for the value of it; that's no great thing. It was a get it out of you. To have something in for my money."

"Ha! You're prudent, prudent, sir!" cries Grandfather Smallweed, his legs.

"Very. I always was." Puff. "It's a sure sign of my prudence, t found the way here." Puff. "Also, that I am what I am." Puff. "I known to be prudent," says Mr. George, composedly smoking. "I ros that way."

"Don't be down-hearted, sir. You may rise yet."

Mr. George laughs and drinks.

"Ha'n't you no relations, now," asks Grandfather Smallweed, with in his eyes, "who would pay off this little principal, or who would lend yo name or two that I could persuade my friend in the city to make you advance upon? Two good names would be sufficient for my friend in Ha'n't you no such relations, Mr. George?"

Mr. George, still composedly smoking, replies, "if I had, I shouldn' them. I have been trouble enough to my belongings in my day. It very good sort of penitence in a vagabond, who has wasted the best ti life, to go back then to decent people that he never was a credit to, and them; but it's not my sort. The best kind of amends then, for hav away, is to keep away, in my opinion."

"But natural affection, Mr. George," hints Grandfather Smallweed.

"For two good names, hey?" says Mr. George, shaking his head, composedly smoking. "No. That's not my sort, either."

Grandfather Smallweed has been gradually sliding down in his chair last adjustment, and is now a bundle of clothes, with a voice in it calling That Houri appearing, shakes him up in the usual manner, and is charg old gentleman to remain near him. For he seems chary of putting his the trouble of repeating his late attentions.

"Ha!" he observes, when he is in trim again. "If you could have t the Captain, Mr. George, it would have been the making of you. If, first came here, in consequence of our advertisements in the newspapers- say 'our,' I'm alluding to the advertisements of my friend in the city, an two others who embark their capital in the same way, and are so friendly me as sometimes to give me a lift with my little pittance—if, at that t could have helped us, Mr. George, it would have been the making of yo

"I was willing enough to be 'made,' as you call it," says Mr. George, not quite so placidly as before, for since the entrance of Judy he has been *measure disturbed by a fascination*, not of the admiring kind, which ob

s she stands by her grandfather's chair; "but, on the whole, I am
ow."
George? In the name of—of Brimstone, why?" says Grandfather
ith a plain appearance of exasperation. (Brimstone apparently
is eye lighting on Mrs. Smallweed in her slumber.)
asons, comrade."
two reasons, Mr. George? In the name of the——"
nd in the city?" suggests Mr. George, composedly drinking.
like. What two reasons?"
place," returns Mr. George; but still looking at Judy, as if, she
ld so like her grandfather, it is indifferent which of the two he
ou gentlemen took me in. You advertised that Mr. Hawdon
lon, if you hold to the saying, Once a captain always a captain) was
ething to his advantage."
turns the old man, shrilly and sharply.
ys Mr. George, smoking on. "It wouldn't have been much to
o have been clapped into prison by the whole bill and judgment
m."
u know that? Some of his rich relations might have paid his debts,
l for 'em. Besides, he had taken *us* in. He owed us immense
l. I would sooner have strangled him than had no return. If I
g of him," snarls the old man, holding up his impotent ten fingers,
angle him now." And in a sudden access of fury, he throws the
unoffending Mrs. Smallweed, but it passes harmlessly on one side

ed to be told," returns the trooper, taking his pipe from his lips for
l carrying his eyes back from following the progress of the cushion,
wl which is burning low, "that he carried on heavily and went to
been at his right hand many a day, when he was charging upon ruin
was with him, when he was sick and well, rich and poor. I laid
him, after he had run through everything and broken down every-
him—when he held a pistol to his head."
had let it off!" says the benevolent old man, "and blown his head
ieces as he owed pounds!"
ld have been a smash indeed," returns the trooper coolly; "any
een young, hopeful, and handsome in the days gone by; and I am
ound him, when he was neither, to lead to a result so much to his
hat's reason number one."
nber two's as good?" snarls the old man.
It's more of a selfish reason. If I had found him, I must have
her world to look. He was there."
ou know he was there?"
here."
u know he wasn't here?"
your temper as well as your money," says Mr. George, calmly
ashes out of his pipe. "He was drowned long before. I am con-
He went over a ship's side. Whether intentionally or accidentally,
Perhaps your friend in the city does.—Do you know what that
mallweed?" he adds, after breaking off to whistle one, accompa-
le with the empty pipe.
plies the old man. "No. We never have tunes here."
e Dead March in Saul. They bury soldiers to it; so it's the
the subject. Now, if your pretty grand-daughter—excuse me, miss

—will condescend to take care of this pipe for two months, we shall m
of one next time. Good evening, Mr. Smallweed!"

"My dear friend!" The old man gives him both his hands.

"So you think your friend in the city will be hard upon me, if I fa
ment?" says the trooper, looking down upon him like a giant.

"My dear friend, I am afraid he will," returns the old man, looking
like a pigmy.

Mr. George laughs; and with a glance at Mr. Smallweed, and a pan
tion to the scornful Judy, strides out of the parlour, clashing imaginary
other metallic appurtenances as he goes.

"You're a damned rogue," says the old gentleman, making a hideo
at the door as he shuts it. "But I'll lime you, you dog, I'll lime you!

After this amiable remark, his spirit soars into those enchanting reg
flection which its education and pursuits have opened to it; and ag
Mrs. Smallweed wile away the rosy hours, two unrelieved sentinels f
aforesaid by the Black Serjeant.

While the twain are faithful to their post, Mr. George strides through
with a massive kind of swagger and a grave-enough face. It is eight o'
and the day is fast drawing in. He stops hard by Waterloo Bridge, r
playbill; decides to go to Astley's Theatre. Being there, is much deli
the horses and the feats of strength; looks at the weapons with a c
disapproves of the combats, as giving evidences of unskilful swordsma
is touched home by the sentiments. In the last scene, when the E
Tartary gets up into a cart and condescends to bless the united lovers b
over them with the Union-Jack, his eye-lashes are moistened with emo

The theatre over, Mr. George comes across the water again, and mak
to that curious region lying about the Haymarket and Leicester Squar
a centre of attraction to indifferent foreign hotels and indifferent
racket-courts, fighting-men, swordsmen, footguards, old china, gami
exhibitions, and a large medley of shabbiness and shrinking out of sig
trating to the heart of this region, he arrives, by a court and a long w
passage, at a great brick building, composed of bare walls, floors, roof-l
skylights; on the front of which, if it can be said to have any front,
GEORGE'S SHOOTING GALLERY, &C.

Into George's Shooting Gallery, &c., he goes; and in it there are
(partly turned off now), and two whitened targets for rifle-shooting, a
accommodation, and fencing appliances, and all necessaries for the Bri
boxing. None of these sports or exercises being pursued in George'
Gallery to-night; which is so devoid of company, that a little grote
with a large head, has it all to himself, and lies asleep upon the floor.

The little man is dressed something like a gunsmith, in a green baize
cap; and his face and hands are dirty with gunpowder, and begrimed wit
ing of guns. As he lies in the light, before a glaring white target, the
him shines again. Not far off, is the strong, rough, primitive table, w
upon it, at which he has been working. He is a little man with a face
together, who appears, from a certain blue and speckled appearance t
his cheeks presents, to have been blown up, in the way of business, at
time or times.

"Phil!" says the trooper, in a quiet voice.

"All right!" cries Phil, scrambling to his feet.

"Anything been doing?"

"Flat as ever so much swipes," says Phil. "Five dozen rifle an
pistol. As to aim!" Phil gives a howl at the recollection.

up shop, Phil!"
moves about to execute this order, it appears that he is lame, though ove very quickly. On the speckled side of his face he has no eyebrow, e other side he has a bushy black one, which want of uniformity gives y singular and rather sinister appearance. Everything seems to have to his hands that could possibly take place, consistently with the reten- the fingers; for they are notched, and seamed, and crumpled all over. rs to be very strong, and lifts heavy benches about as if he had no idea ht was. He has a curious way of limping round the gallery with his against the wall, and tacking off at objects he wants to lay hold of, going straight to them, which has left a smear all round the four walls, ally called "Phil's mark."
stodian of George's Gallery in George's absence concludes his proceed- n he has locked the great doors, and turned out all the lights but one, leaves to glimmer, by dragging out from a wooden cabin in a corner two and bedding. These being drawn to opposite ends of the gallery, the akes his own bed, and Phil makes his.
" says the master, walking towards him without his coat and waistcoat, g more soldierly than ever in his braces. "You were found in a door- n't you."
r," says Phil. "Watchman tumbled over me."
, vagabondizing came natural to *you*, from the beginning."
t'ral as possible," says Phil.
night!"
night, guv'ner."
not even go straight to bed, but finds it necessary to shoulder round two e gallery, and then tack off at his mattress. The trooper, after taking a wo in the rifle-distance, and looking up at the moon now shining he skylights, strides to his own mattress by a shorter route, and goes to

CHAPTER XXII.

MR. BUCKET.

y looks pretty cool in Lincoln's Inn Fields, though the evening is hot: Mr. Tulkinghorn's windows are wide open, and the room is lofty, gusty. ny. These may not be desirable characteristics when November comes nd sleet, or January with ice and snow; but they have their merits in long vacation weather. They enable Allegory, though it has cheeks es, and knees like bunches of blossoms, and rosy swellings for calves to d muscles to its arms, to look tolerably cool to-night.
of dust comes in at Mr. Tulkinghorn's windows, and plenty more has among his furniture and papers. It lies thick everywhere. When a m the country that has lost its way, takes fright, and makes a blind sh out again, it flings as much dust in the eyes of Allegory as the law— lkinghorn, one of its trustiest representatives—may scatter, on occasion, s of the laity.
owering magazine of dust, the universal article into which his papers and nd all his *clients, and all things* of earth, animate and inanimate, are

resolving, Mr. Tulkinghorn sits at one of the open windows, enjoying
old port. Though a hard-grained man, close, dry, and silent, he can
wine with the best. He has a priceless bin of port in some artful s
the Fields, which is one of his many secrets. When he dines alone in
as he has dined to-day, and has his bit of fish and his steak or chicken
from the coffee-house, he descends with a candle to the echoing regions
deserted mansion, and, heralded by a remote reverberation of thunder
comes gravely back, encircled by an earthy atmosphere, and carrying a
which he pours a radiant nectar, two score and ten years old, that blus
glass to find itself so famous, and fills the whole room with the fr
southern grapes.

Mr. Tulkinghorn, sitting in the twilight by the open window, enjoys
As if it whispered to him of its fifty years of silence and seclusion, it sh
the closer. More impenetrable than ever, he sits, and drinks, and m
were, in secrecy; pondering, at that twilight hour, on all the mysteries
associated with darkening woods in the country, and vast blank shut-u
town: and perhaps sparing a thought or two for himself, and his fam
and his money, and his will—all a mystery to every one—and that on
friend of his, a man of the same mould and a lawyer too, who lived
kind of life until he was seventy-five years old, and then, suddenly con
it is supposed) an impression that it was too monotonous, gave his gol
his hair-dresser one summer evening, and walked leisurely home to th
and hanged himself.

But, Mr. Tulkinghorn is not alone to-night, to ponder at his usu
Seated at the same table, though with his chair modestly and unc
drawn a little way from it, sits a bald, mild, shining man, who coug
fully behind his hand when the lawyer bids him fill his glass.

"Now, Snagsby," says Mr. Tulkinghorn, "to go over this odd story

"If you please, sir."

"You told me when you were so good as to step round here, last nig

"For which I must ask you to excuse me if it was a liberty,
remember that you had taken a sort of an interest in that person, and I
possible that you might—just—wish—to ——"

Mr. Tulkinghorn is not the man to help him to any conclusion, o
anything as to any possibility concerning himself. So Mr. Snagsby
into saying, with an awkward cough, "I must ask you to excuse the lib
am sure."

"Not at all," says Mr. Tulkinghorn. "You told me, Snagsby, th
on your hat and came round without mentioning your intention to
That was prudent I think, because it's not a matter of such importa
requires to be mentioned."

"Well, sir," returns Mr. Snagsby, "you see my little woman is—not
fine a point upon it—inquisitive. She's inquisitive. Poor little th
liable to spasms, and it's good for her to have her mind employed.
quence of which she employs it—I should say upon every individual
can lay hold of, whether it concerns her or not—especially not. My lit
has a very active mind, sir."

Mr. Snagsby drinks, and murmurs with an admiring cough behind

"Dear me, very fine wine indeed!"

"Therefore you kept your visit to yourself, last night?" says Mr. Tu
"And to-night, too?"

"Yes, sir, and to-night, too. My little woman is at present in—not
fine a point on it—in a pious state, or in what she considers such, and a

Evening Exertions (which is the name they go by) of a reverend party of the name of Chadband. He has a great deal of eloquence at his command, undoubtedly, but I am not quite favourable to his style myself. That's neither here nor there. My little woman being engaged in that way, made it easier for me to step round in a quiet manner."

Mr. Tulkinghorn assents. "Fill your glass, Snagsby."

"Thank you, sir, I am sure," returns the stationer, with his cough of deference. "This is wonderfully fine wine, sir!"

"It is a rare wine now," says Mr. Tulkinghorn. "It is fifty years old."

"Is it indeed, sir? But I am not surprised to hear it, I am sure. It might be —any age almost." After rendering this general tribute to the port, Mr. Snagsby in his modesty coughs an apology behind his hand for drinking anything so precious.

"Will you run over, once again, what the boy said?" asks Mr. Tulkinghorn, putting his hands into the pockets of his rusty smallclothes and leaning quietly back in his chair.

"With pleasure, sir."

Then, with fidelity, though with some prolixity, the law-stationer repeats Jo's statement made to the assembled guests at his house. On coming to the end of his narrative, he gives a great start, and breaks off with—"Dear me, sir, I wasn't aware there was any other gentleman present!"

Mr. Snagsby is dismayed to see, standing with an attentive face between himself and the lawyer, at a little distance from the table, a person with a hat and stick in his hand, who was not there when he himself came in, and has not since entered by the door or by either of the windows. There is a press in the room, but its hinges have not creaked, nor has a step been audible upon the floor. Yet this third person stands there, with his attentive face, and his hat and stick in his hands, and his hands behind him, a composed and quiet listener. He is a stoutly built, steady-looking, sharp-eyed man in black, of about the middle-age. Except that he looks at Mr. Snagsby as if he were going to take his portrait, there is nothing remarkable about him at first sight but his ghostly manner of appearing.

"Don't mind this gentleman," says Mr. Tulkinghorn, in his quiet way. "This is only Mr. Bucket."

"O indeed, sir?" returns the stationer, expressing by a cough that he is quite in the dark as to who Mr. Bucket may be.

"I wanted him to hear this story," says the lawyer, "because I have half a mind (for a reason) to know more of it, and he is very intelligent in such things. What do you say to this, Bucket?"

"It's very plain, sir. Since our people have moved this boy on, and he's not to be found on his old lay, if Mr. Snagsby don't object to go down with me to Tom-all-Alone's and point him out, we can have him here in less than a couple of hours' time. I can do it without Mr. Snagsby, of course; but this is the shortest way."

"Mr. Bucket is a detective officer, Snagsby," says the lawyer in explanation.

"Is he, indeed, sir?" says Mr. Snagsby, with a strong tendency in his chops of hair to stand on end.

"And if you have no real objection to accompany Mr. Bucket to the place in question," pursues the lawyer, "I shall feel obliged to you if you will do so."

In a moment's hesitation on the part of Mr. Snagsby, Bucket dips down to the bottom of his mind.

"Don't you be afraid of hurting the boy," he says. "You won't do that. We're all right as far as the boy's concerned. We shall only bring him here to ask him

a question or so I want to put to him, and he'll be paid for his trouble, an away again. It'll be a good job for him. I promise you, as a man, th shall see the boy sent away all right. Don't you be afraid of hurting him an't going to do that."

"Very well, Mr. Tulkinghorn!" cries Mr. Snagsby cheerfully, and rea "since that's the case ——"

"Yes! and lookee here, Mr. Snagsby," resumes Bucket, taking him a the arm, tapping him familiarly on the breast, and speaking in a confidentia "You're a man of the world, you know, and a man of business, and a m sense. That's what *you* are."

"I am sure I am much obliged to you for your good opinion," retur stationer, with his cough of modesty, "but ——"

"That's what *you* are, you know," says Bucket. "Now, it an't necess say to a man like you, engaged in your business, which is a business of tr requires a person to be wide awake and have his senses about him, and h screwed on tight (I had an uncle in your business once)—it an't necessary to a man like you, that it's the best and wisest way to keep little matters li quiet. Don't you see? Quiet!"

"Certainly, certainly," returns the other.

"I don't mind telling *you*," says Bucket, with an engaging appearance o ness, "that as far as I can understand it, there seems to be a doubt wheth dead person wasn't entitled to a little property, and whether this female been up to some games respecting that property, don't you see?"

"O!" says Mr. Snagsby, but not appearing to see quite distinctly.

"Now, what *you* want," pursues Bucket, again tapping Mr. Snagsby breast in a comfortable and soothing manner, "is, that every person shou their rights according to justice. That's what *you* want."

"To be sure," returns Mr. Snagsby with a nod.

"On account of which, and at the same time to oblige a—do you ca your business, customer or client? I forget how my uncle used to call it."

"Why, I generally say customer myself," replies Mr. Snagsby.

"You're right!" returns Mr. Bucket, shaking hands with him quite af ately,—"on account of which, and at the same time to oblige a rea customer, you mean to go down with me, in confidence, to Tom-all-Alone to keep the whole thing quiet ever afterwards and never mention it to an That's about your intentions, if I understand you?"

"You are right, sir. You are right," says Mr. Snagsby.

"Then here's your hat," returns his new friend, quite as intimate with h he had made it; "and if you're ready, I am."

They leave Mr. Tulkinghorn, without a ruffle on the surface of his unf able depths, drinking his old wine, and go down into the streets.

"You don't happen to know a very good sort of person of the name of G do you?" says Bucket, in friendly converse as they descend the stairs.

"No," says Mr. Snagsby, considering, "I don't know anybody of that Why?"

"Nothing particular," says Bucket; "only, having allowed his temper a little the better of him, and having been threatening some respectable per is keeping out of the way of a warrant I have got against him—which it's that a man of sense should do."

As they walk along, Mr. Snagsby observes, as a novelty, that, however their pace may be, his companion still seems in some undefinable manner t and lounge; also, that whenever he is going to turn to the right or left, he pr to have a fixed purpose in his mind of going straight ahead, and wheels off, s

last moment. Now and then, when they pass a police-constable on his Snagsby notices that both the constable and his guide fall into a deep as they come towards each other, and appear entirely to overlook each to gaze into space. In a few instances, Mr. Bucket, coming behind r-sized young man with a shining hat on, and his sleek hair twisted into rl on each side of his head, almost without glancing at him touches him tick; upon which the young man, looking round, instantly evaporates. ost part Mr. Bucket notices things in general, with a race a unchanging at mourning ring on his little finger, or the brooch, composed of not nond and a good deal of setting, which he wears in his shirt.

hey came at last to Tom-all-Alone's, Mr. Bucket stops for a moment at , and takes a lighted bull's-eye from the constable on duty there, who npanies him with his own particular bull's-eye at his waist. Between nductors, Mr. Snagsby passes along the middle of a villainous street, unventilated, deep in black mud and corrupt water—though the roads ewhere—and reeking with such smells and sights that he, who has lived all his life, can scarce believe his senses. Branching from this street ps of ruins, are other streets and courts so infamous that Mr. Snagsby body and mind, and feels as if he were going, every moment deeper the infernal gulf.

off a bit here, Mr. Snagsby," says Bucket, as a kind of shabby palan- ne towards them, surrounded by a noisy crowd. "Here's the fever the street!"

unseen wretch goes by, the crowd, leaving that object of attraction, nd the three visitors, like a dream of horrible faces, and fades away up into ruins, and behind walls; and with occasional cries and shrill warning, thenceforth flits about them until they leave the place.

hose the fever-houses, Darby?" Mr. Bucket coolly asks, as he turns his an a line of stinking ruins.

replies that "all them are," and further that in all, for months and e people "have been down by dozens," and have been carried out, dead "like sheep with the rot." Bucket observing to Mr. Snagsby as they in, that he looks a little poorly, Mr. Snagsby answers that he feels as if t breathe the dreadful air.

inquiry made, at various houses, for a boy named Jo. As few people in Tom-all-Alone's by any Christian sign, there is much reference to by whether he means Carrots, or the Colonel, or Gallows, or Young Terrier Tip, or Lanky, or the Brick. Mr. Snagsby describes over and . There are conflicting opinions respecting the original of his picture. k it must be Carrots; some say the Brick. The Colonel is produced, at all near the thing. Whenever Mr. Snagsby and his conductors are , the crowd flows round, and from its squalid depths obsequious advice to Mr. Bucket. Whenever they move, and the angry bull's-eyes glare, ay, and flits about them up the alleys, and in the ruins, and behind the efore.

here is a lair found out where Toughy, or the Tough Subject, lays him ight; and it is thought that the Tough Subject may be Jo. Comparison etween Mr. Snagsby and the proprietress of the house—a drunken face a black bundle, and flaring out of a heap of rags on the floor of a dog- ch is her private apartment—leads to the establishment of this con- Toughy has gone to the Doctor's to get a bottle of stuff for a sick at will be here anon.

who have we got here to-night?" says Mr. Bucket, opening another

door and glaring in with his bull's-eye. "Two drunken men, eh? women? The men are sound enough," turning back each sleeper's arm face to look at him. "Are these your good men, my dears?"

"Yes, sir," returns one of the women. "They are our husbands."

"Brickmakers, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"What are you doing here? You don't belong to London."

"No, sir. We belong to Hertfordshire."

"Whereabouts in Hertfordshire?"

"Saint Albans."

"Come up on the tramp?"

"We walked up yesterday. There's no work down with us at presen have done no good by coming here, and shall do none, I expect."

"That's not the way to do much good," says Mr. Bucket, turning his the direction of the unconscious figures on the ground.

"It an't indeed," replies the woman with a sigh. "Jenny and me full well."

The room, though two or three feet higher than the door, is so low head of the tallest of the visitors would touch the blackened ceiling if upright. It is offensive to every sense; even the gross candle burns sickly in the polluted air. There are a couple of benches, and a higher way of table. The men lie asleep where they stumbled down, but the w by the candle. Lying in the arms of the woman who has spoken, is a ve child.

"Why, what age do you call that little creature?" says Bucket. "It if it was born yesterday." He is not at all rough about it; and as he light gently on the infant, Mr. Snagsby is strangely reminded of anothe encircled with light, that he has seen in pictures.

"He is not three weeks old yet, sir," says the woman.

"Is he your child?"

"Mine."

The other woman, who was bending over it when they came in, stoo again, and kisses it as it lies asleep.

"You seem as fond of it as if you were the mother yourself," says Mr

"I was the mother of one like it, master, and it died."

"Ah Jenny, Jenny!" says the other woman to her; "better so. Mu to think of dead than alive, Jenny! Much better!"

"Why, you an't such an unnatural woman, I hope," returns Bucket "as to wish your own child dead?"

"God knows you are right, master," she returns. "I am not. I between it and death, with my own life if I could, as true as any pretty la

"Then don't talk in that wrong manner," says Mr. Bucket, mollifie "Why do you do it?"

"It's brought into my head, master," returns the woman, her eyes fil tears, "when I look down at the child lying so. If it was never to wake you'd think me mad, I should take on so. I know that very well. I Jenny when she lost hers—warn't I, Jenny?—and I know how she griev look around you, at this place. Look at them;" glancing at the sleepe ground. "Look at the boy you're waiting for, who's gone out to do m turn. Think of the children that your business lays with often and often, *you* see grow up!"

"Well, well," says Mr. Bucket, "you train him respectable, and he *comfort to you,* and look after you in your old age, you know."

n to try hard," she answers, wiping her eyes. "But I have been a-being over-tired to-night, and not well with the ague, of all the many (I'll come in his way. My master will be against it, and he'll be beat, e beat, and made to fear his home, and perhaps to stray wild. If I work er so much, and ever so hard, there's no one to help me; and if he should bad, 'spite of all I could do, and the time should come when I should in his sleep, made hard and changed, an't it likely I should think of lies in my lap now, and wish he had died as Jenny's child died!"

, there!" says Jenny. "Liz, you're tired and ill. Let me take him." g so, she displaces the mother's dress, but quickly readjusts it over the nd bruised bosom where the baby has been lying.

y dead child," says Jenny, walking up and down as she nurses, "that love this child so dear, and it's my dead child that makes her love it so s even to think of its being taken away from her now. While she thinks k what fortune would I give to have my darling back. But we mean hing, if we knew how to say it, us two mothers does in our poor hearts!"

Snagsby blows his nose, and coughs his cough of sympathy, a step is out. Mr. Bucket throws his light into the doorway, and says to Mr. "Now, what do you say to Toughy? Will *he* do?"

Jo," says Mr. Snagsby.

is amazed in the disc of light, like a ragged figure in a magic-lanthorn, to think that he has offended against the law in not having moved on . Mr. Snagsby, however, giving him the consolatory assurance, "It's you will be paid for, Jo," he recovers; and, on being taken outside by t for a little private confabulation, tells his tale satisfactorily, though ath.

e squared it with the lad," says Mr. Bucket, returning, "and it's all w, Mr. Snagsby, we're ready for you."

has to complete his errand of good-nature by handing over the physic n to get, which he delivers with the laconic verbal direction that "it's to d'rectly." Secondly, Mr. Snagsby has to lay upon the table half-a-usual panacea for an immense variety of afflictions. Thirdly, Mr. Bucket Jo by the arm a little above the elbow and walk him on before him: hich observance, neither the Tough Subject nor any other Subject could onally conducted to Lincoln's Inn Fields. These arrangements com-y give the women good night, and come out once more into black and all-Alone's.

oisome ways through which they descended into that pit, they gradually m it; the crowd flitting, and whistling, and skulking about them, until to the verge, where restoration of the bull's-eyes is made to Darby. crowd, like a concourse of imprisoned demons, turns back, yelling, and more. Through the clearer and fresher streets, never so clear and fresh agsby's mind as now, they walk and ride, until they come to Mr. Tul-gate.

ascend the dim stairs (Mr. Tulkinghorn's chambers being on the first Bucket mentions that he has the key of the outer door in his pocket, here is no need to ring. For a man so expert in most things of that et takes time to open the door, and makes some noise too. It may be nds a note of preparation.

, they come at last into the hall, where a lamp is burning, and so into ghorn's usual room—the room where he drank his old wine to-night. there, but his two old-fashioned candlesticks are; and the room is ght.

nd to confer upon me the favour of your distinguished recommendation ?"
all means, Mademoiselle Hortense."
word from Mr. Tulkinghorn is so powerful,"—"It shall not be wanting,
noiselle."—"Receive the assurance of my devoted gratitude, dear sir."—
l night." Mademoiselle goes out with an air of native gentility; and Mr.
, to whom it is, on an emergency, as natural to be groom of the ceremonies
to be anything else, shows her down-stairs, not without gallantry.
ell, Bucket ?" quoth Mr. Tulkinghorn, on his return.
s all squared, you see, as I squared it myself, sir. There an't a doubt that it
e other one with this one's dress on. The boy was exact respecting colours
erything. Mr. Snagsby, I promised you as a man that he should be sent
ll right. Don't say it wasn't done!"
u have kept your word, sir," returns the stationer; "and if I can be
further use, Mr. Tulkinghorn, I think, as my little woman will be getting
——"
ank you, Snagsby, no further use," says Mr. Tulkinghorn. "I am quite
d to you for the trouble you have taken already."
t at all, sir. I wish you good night."
u see, Mr. Snagsby," says Mr. Bucket, accompanying him to the door,
aking hands with him over and over again, "what I like in you is, that
a man it's of no use pumping; that's what *you* are. When you know you
one a right thing, you put it away, and it's done with and gone, and there's
of it. That's what *you* do."
at is certainly what I endeavour to do, sir," returns Mr. Snagsby.
, you don't do yourself justice. It an't what you endeavour to do," says
cket, shaking hands with him and blessing him in the tenderest manner,
hat you *do*. That's what I estimate in a man in your way of business."
Snagsby makes a suitable response; and goes homeward so confused by
nts of the evening, that he is doubtful of his being awake and out—doubtful
eality of the streets through which he goes—doubtful of the reality of the
hat shines above him. He is presently reassured on these subjects, by the
engeable reality of Mrs. Snagsby, sitting up with her head in a perfect bee-
curl-papers and nightcap: who has dispatched Guster to the police-station
ficial intelligence of her husband's being made away with, and who, within
two hours, has passed through every stage of swooning with the greatest
n. But, as the little woman feelingly says, many thanks she gets for it!

CHAPTER XXIII.

ESTHER'S NARRATIVE.

me home from Mr. Boythorn's after six pleasant weeks. We were often
ark, and in the woods, and seldom passed the Lodge where we had taken
without looking in to speak to the keeper's wife; but we saw no more of
Dedlock, except at church on Sundays. There was company at Chesney
and although several beautiful faces surrounded her, her face retained the
fluence on me as at first. I do not quite know, even now, whether it was
or pleasurable; whether it drew me towards her, or made me shrink from
think I admired her with a kind of fear; and I know that in her presence

my thoughts always wandered back, as they had done at first, to that old time
my life.

I had a fancy, on more than one of these Sundays, that what this lady so cu
ously was to me, I was to her—I mean that I disturbed her thoughts as she inf
enced mine, though in some different way. But when I stole a glance at her, a
saw her so composed and distant and unapproachable, I felt this to be a fooli
weakness. Indeed, I felt the whole state of my mind in reference to her to
weak and unreasonable; and I remonstrated with myself about it as much a
could.

One incident that occurred before we quitted Mr. Boythorn's house, I had bet
mention in this place.

I was walking in the garden with Ada, when I was told that some one wish
to see me. Going into the breakfast-room, where this person was waiting, I fou
it to be the French maid who had cast off her shoes and walked through the w
grass, on the day when it thundered and lightened.

"Mademoiselle," she began, looking fixedly at me with her too-eager ey
though otherwise presenting an agreeable appearance, and speaking neither w
boldness nor servility, "I have taken a great liberty in coming here, but you kn
how to excuse it, being so amiable, mademoiselle."

"No excuse is necessary," I returned, "if you wish to speak to me."

"That is my desire, mademoiselle. A thousand thanks for the permission.
have your leave to speak. Is it not?" she said, in a quick, natural way.

"Certainly," said I.

"Mademoiselle, you are so amiable! Listen then, if you please. I have l
my Lady. We could not agree. My Lady is so high; so very high. Pardo
Mademoiselle, you are right!" Her quickness anticipated what I might have s
presently, but as yet had only thought. "It is not for me to come here to co
plain of my Lady. But I say she is so high, so very high. I will not say a wo
more. All the world knows that."

"Go on, if you please," said I.

"Assuredly; mademoiselle, I am thankful for your politeness. Mademoisel
I have an inexpressible desire to find service with a young lady who is good, a
complished, beautiful. You are good, accomplished, and beautiful as an ang
Ah, could I have the honour of being your domestic!"

"I am sorry——" I began.

"Do not dismiss me so soon, mademoiselle!" she said, with an involunta
contraction of her fine black eyebrows. "Let me hope, a moment! Mademo
selle, I know this service would be more retired than that which I have quitt
Well! I wish that. I know this service would be less distinguished than th
which I have quitted. Well! I wish that. I know that I should win less, as
wages here. Good. I am content."

"I assure you," said I, quite embarrassed by the mere idea of having such
attendant, "that I keep no maid——"

"Ah, mademoiselle, but why not? Why not, when you can have one
devoted to you! Who would be enchanted to serve you; who would be so true,
zealous, and so faithful, every day! Mademoiselle, I wish with all my heart to se
you. Do not speak of money at present. Take me as I am. For nothing!"

She was so singularly earnest that I drew back, almost afraid of her. Wi
out appearing to notice it, in her ardour she still pressed herself upon me; spe
ing in a rapid subdued voice, though always with a certain grace and propriety.

"Mademoiselle, I come from the South country, where we are quick, a
where we like and dislike very strong. My Lady was too high for me; I was t
high for her. It is done—past—finished! Receive me as your domestic, and

ve you well. I will do more for you, than you figure to yourself now. mademoiselle, I will—no matter, I will do my utmost possible, in all If you accept my service, you will not repent it. Mademoiselle, you repent it, and I will serve you well. You don't know how well!"

e was a lowering energy in her face, as she stood looking at me while I ed the impossibility of my engaging her (without thinking it necessary to very little I desired to do so), which seemed to bring visibly before me oman from the streets of Paris in the reign of terror. She heard me out interruption; and then said, with her pretty accent, and in her mildest voice: y, mademoiselle, I have received my answer! I am sorry of it. But I elsewhere, and seek what I have not found here. Will you graciously iss your hand?"

ooked at me more intently as she took it, and seemed to take note, with mentary touch, of every vein in it. "I fear I surprised you, mademoiselle, lay of the storm?" she said with a parting curtsey.

feased that she had surprised us all.

ok an oath, mademoiselle," she said, smiling, "and I wanted to stamp it mind, so that I might keep it faithfully. And I will! Adieu, made-!"

ded our conference, which I was very glad to bring to a close. I supposed t away from the village, for I saw her no more; and nothing else occurred rb our tranquil summer pleasures, until six weeks were out, and we returned I began just now by saying.

at time, and for a good many weeks after that time, Richard was constant sits. Besides coming every Saturday or Sunday, and remaining with us onday morning, he sometimes rode out on horseback unexpectedly, and the evening with us, and rode back again early next day. He was as s as ever, and told us he was very industrious; but I was not easy in my bout him. It appeared to me that his industry was all misdirected. I ot find that it led to anything but the formation of delusive hopes in con- with the suit already the pernicious cause of so much sorrow and ruin. He at the core of that mystery now, he told us; and nothing could be plainer at the will under which he and Ada were to take, I don't know how many ds of pounds, must be finally established, if there were any sense or justice Court of Chancery—but O what a great *if* that sounded in my ears—and that py conclusion could not be much longer delayed. He proved this to himself e weary arguments on that side he had read, and every one of them sunk him n the infatuation. He had even begun to haunt the Court. He told us saw Miss Flite there daily; how they talked together, and how he did her ndnesses; and how, while he laughed at her, he pitied her from his heart. never thought—never, my poor, dear, sanguine Richard, capable of so appiness then, and with such better things before him!—what a fatal s riveting between his fresh youth and her faded age; between his free nd her caged birds, and her hungry garret, and her wandering mind.

loved him too well, to mistrust him much in anything he said or did, and rdian, though he frequently complained of the east wind and read more ual in the Growlery, preserved a strict silence on the subject. So, I , one day when I went to London to meet Caddy Jellyby, at her solicita- would ask Richard to be in waiting for me at the coach-office, that we ave a little talk together. I found him there when I arrived, and we away arm in arm.

ll, Richard," said I, as soon as I could begin to be grave with him, "are ginning to *feel more settled now?*"

"O yes, my dear!" returned Richard. "I'm all right enough."

"But settled?" said I.

"How do you mean, settled?" returned Richard, with his gay laugh.

"Settled in the law," said I.

"O aye," replied Richard, "I'm all right enough."

"You said that before, my dear Richard."

"And you don't think it's an answer, eh? Well! Perhaps it's not. You mean, do I feel as if I were settling down?"

"Yes."

"Why, no, I can't say I am settling down," said Richard, strongly sising "down," as if that expressed the difficulty; "because one can't se while this business remains in such an unsettled state. When I say this of course I mean the—forbidden subject."

"Do you think it will ever be in a settled state?" said I.

"Not the least doubt of it," answered Richard.

We walked a little way without speaking; and presently Richard s me in his frankest and most feeling manner, thus:

"My dear Esther, I understand you, and I wish to Heaven I were a n stant sort of fellow. I don't mean constant to Ada, for I love her dearly and better every day—but constant to myself. (Somehow, I mean s that I can't very well express, but you'll make it out.) If I were a more sort of fellow, I should have held on, either to Badger, or to Kenge and like grim Death; and should have begun to be steady and systematic time, and shouldn't be in debt, and——"

"*Are* you in debt, Richard?"

"Yes," said Richard, "I am a little so, my dear. Also, I have take too much to billiards, and that sort of thing. Now the murder 's out; yo me, Esther, don't you?"

"You know I don't," said I.

"You are kinder to me than I often am to myself," he returned. " Esther, I am a very unfortunate dog not to be more settled, but how more settled? If you live in an unfinished house, you couldn't settle do if you were condemned to leave everything you undertook, unfinished, y find it hard to apply yourself to anything; and yet that's my unhappy was born into this unfinished contention with all its chances and char it began to unsettle me before I quite knew the difference between a s and a suit of clothes; and it has gone on unsettling me ever since; an am now, conscious sometimes that I am but a worthless fellow to love fiding cousin Ada."

We were in a solitary place, and he put his hands before his eyes an as he said the words.

"O Richard!" said I, "do not be so moved. You have a noble nat Ada's love may make you worthier every day."

"I know, my dear," he replied, pressing my arm, "I know all thi mustn't mind my being a little soft now, for I have had all this upon my a long time; and have often meant to speak to you, and have sometime opportunity and sometimes courage. I know what the thought of Ada do for me, but it doesn't do it. I am too unsettled even for that. I most devotedly; and yet I do her wrong, in doing myself wrong, e and hour. But it can't last for ever. We shall come on for a final and get judgment in our favour; and then you and Ada shall see wh *really be!*"

It had given me a pang to hear him sob, and see the tears start out bet

ut that was infinitely less affecting to me, than the hopeful animation
h he said these words.
e looked well into the papers, Esther—I have been deep in them for
—he continued, recovering his cheerfulness in a moment, "and you may
it that we shall come out triumphant. As to years of delay, there has
ant of them, Heaven knows! and there is the greater probability of our
he matter to a speedy close; in fact, it's on the paper now. It will be
t last, and then you shall see!"
ig how he had just now placed Messrs. Kenge and Carboy in the same
with Mr. Badger, I asked him when he intended to be articled in
Inn?
again! I think not at all, Esther," he returned with an effort. "I
ve had enough of it. Having worked at Jarndyce and Jarndyce like a
e, I have slaked my thirst for the law, and satisfied myself that I shouldn't
esides, I find it unsettles me more and more to be so constantly upon
of action. So what," continued Richard, confident again by this time,
urally turn my thoughts to?"
t imagine," said I.
look so serious," returned Richard, "because it's the best thing I can
ar Esther, I am certain. It's not as if I wanted a profession for life.
ceedings will come to a termination, and then I am provided for. No.
n it as a pursuit which is in its nature more or less unsettled, and there-
l to my temporary condition—I may say, precisely suited. What is it
urally turn my thoughts to?"
l at him, and shook my head.
," said Richard, in a tone of perfect conviction, "but the army!"
my?" said I.
rmy, of course. What I have to do, is, to get a commission; and—
, you know!" said Richard.
n he showed me, proved by elaborate calculations in his pocket-book,
sing he had contracted, say two hundred pounds of debt in six months,
army; and that he contracted no debt at all within a corresponding
the army—as to which he had quite made up his mind; this step must
aving of four hundred pounds in a year, or two thousand pounds in five
ich was a considerable sum. And then he spoke so ingenuously and
of the sacrifice he made in withdrawing himself for a time from Ada,
e earnestness with which he aspired—as in thought he always did, I
well—to repay her love, and to ensure her happiness, and to conquer
amiss in himself, and to acquire the very soul of decision, that he made
iche keenly, sorely. For, I thought how would this end, how could this
so soon and so surely all his manly qualities were touched by the fatal
ruined everything it rested on!

to Richard with all the earnestness I felt, and all the hope I could not
hen; and implored him, for Ada's sake, not to put any trust in Chancery.
id, Richard readily assented; riding over the Court and everything else
way, and drawing the brightest pictures of the character he was to
—alas, when the grievous suit should loose its hold upon him! We had
, but it always came back to that, in substance.
we came to Soho Square, where Caddy Jellyby had appointed to wait
a quiet place in the neighbourhood of Newman Street. Caddy was in
in the centre, and hurried out as soon as I appeared. After a few cheer-
Richard left us together.
has a pupil over the way, Esther," said Caddy, "and got the key for

us. So, if you will walk round and round here with me, we can lock ourse and I can tell you comfortably what I wanted to see your dear good face ab

"Very well, my dear," said I. "Nothing could be better." So Cadd affectionately squeezing the dear good face as she called it, locked the ga took my arm, and we began to walk round the garden very cosily.

"You see, Esther," said Caddy, who thoroughly enjoyed a little conf "after you spoke to me about its being wrong to marry without Ma's know or even to keep Ma long in the dark respecting our engagement—though I believe Ma cares much for me, I must say—I thought it right to mentio opinions to Prince. In the first place, because I want to profit by everythi tell me; and in the second place, because I have no secrets from Prince."

"I hope he approved, Caddy?"

"O, my dear! I assure you he would approve of anything you could say have no idea what an opinion he has of you!"

"Indeed!"

"Esther, it's enough to make anybody but me jealous," said Caddy, la and shaking her head; "but it only makes me joyful, for you are the firs I ever had, and the best friend I ever can have, and nobody can respect an you too much to please me."

"Upon my word, Caddy," said I, "you are in the general conspiracy t me in a good humour. Well, my dear?"

"Well! I am going to tell you," replied Caddy, crossing her hands co tially upon my arm. "So we talked a good deal about it, and so I said to 'Prince, as Miss Summerson ——'"

"I hope you didn't say 'Miss Summerson'?"

"No. I didn't!" cried Caddy, greatly pleased, and with the brightest c "I said, 'Esther.' I said to Prince, 'As Esther is decidedly of that o Prince, and has expressed it to me, and always hints it when she writes tho notes, which you are so fond of hearing me read to you, I am prepared to the truth to Ma whenever you think proper. And I think, Prince,' said I Esther thinks that I should be in a better, and truer, and more honourable altogether, if you did the same to your Papa.'"

"Yes, my dear," said I. "Esther certainly does think so."

"So I was right, you see!" exclaimed Caddy. "Well! this troubled I good deal; not because he had the least doubt about it, but because he is siderate of the feelings of old Mr. Turveydrop; and he had his appreh that old Mr. Turveydrop might break his heart, or faint away, or be ver overcome in some affecting manner or other, if he made such an announ He feared old Mr. Turveydrop might consider it undutiful, and might rece great a shock. For, old Mr. Turveydrop's deportment is very beautiful you Esther," said Caddy; "and his feelings are extremely sensitive."

"Are they, my dear?"

"O, extremely sensitive. Prince says so. Now, this has caused my child—I didn't mean to use the expression to you, Esther," Caddy apologi face suffused with blushes, "but I generally call Prince my darling child."

I laughed; and Caddy laughed and blushed, and went on.

"This has caused him, Esther——"

"Caused whom, my dear?"

"O you tiresome thing!" said Caddy, laughing, with her pretty face "My darling child, if you insist upon it!—This has caused him weeks of ness, and has made him delay, from day to day, in a very anxious mann last he said to me, 'Caddy, if Miss Summerson, who is a great favourite *father, could be prevailed* upon to be present when I broke the subject, I

t.' So I promised I would ask you. And I made up my mind, besides," ly, looking at me hopefully, but timidly, "that if you consented, I would fterwards to come with me to Ma. This is what I meant, when I said in hat I had a great favour and a great assistance to beg of you. And if you ou could grant it, Esther, we should both be very grateful."

ne see, Caddy," said I, pretending to consider. "Really I think I a greater thing than that, if the need were pressing. I am at your d the darling child's, my dear, whenever you like."

was quite transported by this reply of mine; being, I believe, as le to the least kindness or encouragement as any tender heart that ever is world; and after another turn or two round the garden, during which n an entirely new pair of gloves, and made herself as resplendent as hat she might do no avoidable discredit to the Master of Deportment, to Newman Street direct.

was teaching, of course. We found him engaged with a not very pupil—a stubborn little girl with a sulky forehead, a deep voice, and an dissatisfied mamma—whose case was certainly not rendered more y the confusion into which we threw her preceptor. The lesson at last n end, after proceeding as discordantly as possible; and when the little hanged her shoes, and had had her white muslin extinguished in shawls, aken away. After a few words of preparation, we then went in search urveydrop; whom we found, grouped with his hat and gloves, as a Deportment, on the sofa in his private apartment—the only comfortable he house. He appeared to have dressed at his leisure, in the intervals collation; and his dressing-case, brushes, and so forth, all of quite an ind, lay about.

r, Miss Summerson; Miss Jellyby."

med! Enchanted!" said Mr. Turveydrop, rising with his high-shouldered Permit me!" handing chairs. "Be seated!" kissing the tips of his left Overjoyed!" shutting his eyes and rolling. "My little retreat is made a " Recomposing himself on the sofa, like the second gentleman in Europe. n you find us, Miss Summerson," said he, "using our little arts to olish! Again the sex stimulates us, and rewards us, by the con- n of its lovely presence. It is much in these times (and we have made y degenerating business of it since the days of His Royal Highness the egent—my patron, if I may presume to say so) to experience that Deport- nt wholly trodden under foot by mechanics. That it can yet bask in the Beauty, my dear madam."

nothing, which I thought a suitable reply; and he took a pinch of snuff.

ear son," said Mr. Turveydrop, "you have four schools this afternoon. ecommend a hasty sandwich."

k you, father," returned Prince, "I will be sure to be punctual. My r, may I beg you to prepare your mind for what I am going to say!"

Heaven!" exclaimed the model, pale and aghast, as Prince and Caddy, hand, bent down before him. "What is this? Is this lunacy! Or his?"

r," returned Prince, with great submission, "I love this young lady, e engaged."

ged!" cried Mr. Turveydrop, reclining on the sofa, and shutting ght with his hand. "An arrow launched at my brain, by my own

have been engaged for some time, father," faltered Prince; "and Miss on, hearing of it, advised that we should declare the fact to you, and

was so very kind as to attend on the present occasion. Miss Jellyby is a lady who deeply respects you, father."

Mr. Turveydrop uttered a groan.

"No, pray don't! Pray don't, father," urged his son. "Miss Jelly young lady who deeply respects you, and our first desire is to conside comfort."

Mr. Turveydrop sobbed.

"No, pray don't, father!" cried his son.

"Boy," said Mr. Turveydrop, "it is well that your sainted mother is this pang. Strike deep, and spare not. Strike home, sir, strike home!"

"Pray, don't say so, father," implored Prince, in tears. "It goes to my I do assure you, father, that our first wish and intention is to conside comfort. Caroline and I do not forget our duty—what is my duty is Car as we have often said together—and, with your approval and consent, fath will devote ourselves to making your life agreeable."

"Strike home," murmured Mr. Turveydrop. "Strike home!"

But he seemed to listen, I thought, too.

"My dear father," returned Prince, "we well know what little comfo are accustomed to, and have a right to; and it will always be our study, a pride, to provide those before anything. If you will bless us with your ap and consent, father, we shall not think of being married until it is quite able to you; and when we *are* married, we shall always make you—of co our first consideration. You must ever be the Head and Master here, f and we feel how truly unnatural it would be in us, if we failed to know i we failed to exert ourselves in every possible way to please you."

Mr. Turveydrop underwent a severe internal struggle, and came upright sofa again, with his cheeks puffing over his stiff cravat: a perfect mo parental deportment.

"My son!" said Mr. Turveydrop. "My children! I cannot resis prayer. Be happy!"

His benignity, as he raised his future daughter-in-law and stretched o hand to his son (who kissed it with affectionate respect and gratitude), w most confusing sight I ever saw.

"My children," said Mr. Turveydrop, paternally encircling Caddy with l arm as she sat beside him, and putting his right hand gracefully on his hip. son and daughter, your happiness shall be my care. I will watch over you. shall always live with me;" meaning, of course, I will always live wit "this house is henceforth as much yours as mine; consider it your home. you long live to share it with me!"

The power of his Deportment was such, that they really were as much come with thankfulness as if, instead of quartering himself upon them f rest of his life, he were making some munificent sacrifice in their favour.

"For myself, my children," said Mr. Turveydrop, "I am falling into t and yellow leaf, and it is impossible to say how long the last feeble tr gentlemanly Deportment may linger in this weaving and spinning age. I long, I will do my duty to society, and will show myself, as usual, about My wants are few and simple. My little apartment here, my few essenti the toilet, my frugal morning meal, and my little dinner, will suffice. I your dutiful affection with the supply of these requirements, and I charge with all the rest."

They were overpowered afresh by his uncommon generosity.

"My son," said Mr. Turveydrop, "for those little points in which y *deficient*—points of Deportment which are born with a man—which n

y cultivation, but can never be originated—you may still rely on me.
faithful to my post, since the days of His Royal Highness the Prince
nd I will not desert it now. No, my son. If you have ever con-
your father's poor position with a feeling of pride, you may rest
t he will do nothing to tarnish it. For yourself, Prince, whose
different (we cannot be all alike, nor is it advisable that we should),
dustrious, earn money, and extend the connexion as much as possible."
ou may depend I will do, dear father, with all my heart," replied

no doubt of it," said Mr. Turveydrop. "Your qualities are not
dear child, but they are steady and useful. And to both of you, my
would merely observe, in the spirit of a sainted Wooman on whose
the happiness of casting, I believe, *some* ray of light,—take care of the
nt, take care of my simple wants, and bless you both!"
Turveydrop then became so very gallant, in honour of the occasion,
Caddy we must really go to Thavies Inn at once if we were to go at all
So we took our departure, after a very loving farewell between Caddy
rothed: and during our walk she was so happy, and so full of old Mr.
's praises, that I would not have said a word in his disparagement for
ration.
e in Thavies Inn had bills in the windows announcing that it was to
ooked dirtier and gloomier and ghastlier than ever. The name of poor
had appeared in the list of Bankrupts, but a day or two before; and
t up in the dining-room with two gentlemen, and a heap of blue bags,
ks, and papers, making the most desperate endeavours to understand
They appeared to me to be quite beyond his comprehension; for
y took me into the dining-room by mistake, and we came upon Mr.
is spectacles, forlornly fenced into a corner by the great dining-table
o gentlemen, he seemed to have given up the whole thing, and to be
nd insensible.
)-stairs to Mrs. Jellyby's room (the children were all screaming in the
d there was no servant to be seen), we found that lady in the midst of
us correspondence, opening, reading, and sorting letters, with a great
n of torn covers on the floor. She was so preoccupied that at first
know me, though she sat looking at me with that curious, bright-eyed,
of hers.
iss Summerson!" she said at last. "I was thinking of something so
I hope you are well. I am happy to see you. Mr. Jarndyce and
quite well?"
n return that Mr. Jellyby was quite well.
ot quite, my dear," said Mrs. Jellyby, in the calmest manner. "He
afortunate in his affairs, and is a little out of spirits. Happily for me,
ch engaged that I have no time to think about it. We have, at the
nent, one hundred and seventy families, Miss Summerson, averaging
in each, either gone or going to the left bank of the Niger."
of the one family so near us, who were neither gone nor going to the
the Niger, and wondered how she could be so placid.
ve brought Caddy back, I see," observed Mrs. Jellyby, with a glance
ghter. "It has become quite a novelty to see her here. She has
ried her old employment, and in fact obliges me to employ a boy."
re, Ma,——" began Caddy.
u know, Caddy," her mother mildly interposed, "that I do employ a
now at his dinner. What is the use of your contradicting?"

"I was not going to contradict, Ma," returned Caddy. "I was only say, that surely you wouldn't have me be a mere drudge all my life."

"I believe, my dear," said Mrs. Jellyby, still opening her letters, ca bright eyes smilingly over them, and sorting them as she spoke, "that y business example before you in your mother. Besides. A mere dru you had any sympathy with the destinies of the human race, it would high above any such idea. But you have none. I have often told you you have no such sympathy."

"Not if it's Africa, Ma, I have not."

"Of course you have not. Now, if I were not happily so much Miss Summerson," said Mrs. Jellyby, sweetly casting her eyes for a m me, and considering where to put the particular letter she had just opene would distress and disappoint me. But I have so much to think of, in c with Borrioboola-Gha, and it is so necessary I should concentrate my there is my remedy, you see."

As Caddy gave me a glance of entreaty, and as Mrs. Jellyby was lo away into Africa straight through my bonnet and head, I thought it opportunity to come to the subject of my visit, and to attract Mrs. attention.

"Perhaps," I began, "you will wonder what has brought me here to you."

"I am always delighted to see Miss Summerson," said Mrs. Jellyby, her employment with a placid smile. "Though I wish," and she sh head, "she was more interested in the Borrioboolan project."

"I have come with Caddy," said I, "because Caddy justly thinks she to have a secret from her mother; and fancies I shall encourage and (though I am sure I don't know how), in imparting one."

"Caddy," said Mrs. Jellyby, pausing for a moment in her occupat then serenely pursuing it after shaking her head, "you are going to tell nonsense."

Caddy untied the strings of her bonnet, took her bonnet off, and it dangle on the floor by the strings, and crying heartily, said, "M engaged."

"O, you ridiculous child!" observed Mrs. Jellyby, with an abstracte she looked over the dispatch last opened; "what a goose you are!"

"I am engaged, Ma," sobbed Caddy, "to young Mr. Turveydrop Academy; and old Mr. Turveydrop (who is a very gentlemanly man inc given his consent, and I beg and pray you'll give us yours, Ma, becaus could be happy without it. I never, never could!" sobbed Caddy, quite of her general complainings, and of everything but her natural affection.

"You see again, Miss Summerson," observed Mrs. Jellyby, serenely, happiness it is to be so much occupied as I am, and to have this nece self-concentration that I have. Here is Caddy engaged to a dancing-mas —mixed up with people who have no more sympathy with the destinie human race than she has herself! This, too, when Mr. Quale, one of philanthropists of our time, has mentioned to me that he was really dispo interested in her!"

"Ma, I always hated and detested Mr. Quale!" sobbed Caddy.

"Caddy, Caddy!" returned Mrs. Jellyby, opening another lett the greatest complacency. "I have no doubt you did. How could otherwise, being totally destitute of the sympathies with which he ov Now, if my public duties were not a favourite child to me, if I were not *with large measures* on a vast scale, these petty details might grieve

Summerson. But can I permit the film of a silly proceeding on the
r (from whom I expect nothing else), to interpose between me and
ican continent? No. No," repeated Mrs. Jellyby, in a calm clear
th an agreeable smile, as she opened more letters and sorted them.
."

prepared for the perfect coolness of this reception, though I might
d it, that I did not know what to say. Caddy seemed equally at a
ellyby continued to open and sort letters; and to repeat occasionally,
rming tone of voice, and with a smile of perfect composure, "No,

Ma," sobbed poor Caddy at last, "you are not angry?"
, you really are an absurd girl," returned Mrs. Jellyby, "to ask such
er what I have said of the preoccupation of my mind."
pe, Ma, you give us your consent, and wish us well?" said Caddy.
a nonsensical child to have done anything of this kind," said Mrs.
d a degenerate child, when you might have devoted yourself to the
easure. But the step is taken, and I have engaged a boy, and there
be said. Now, pray, Caddy," said Mrs. Jellyby—for Caddy was
don't delay me in my work, but let me clear off this heavy batch of
the afternoon post comes in!"
I could not do better than take my leave; I was detained for a
addy's saying,
't object to my bringing him to see you, Ma?"
e, Caddy," cried Mrs. Jellyby, who had relapsed into that distant
n, "have you begun again? Bring whom?"
."
addy!" said Mrs. Jellyby, quite weary of such little matters. "Then
g him some evening which is not a Parent Society night, or a Branch
amification night. You must accommodate the visit to the demands
. My dear Miss Summerson, it was very kind of you to come here
is silly chit. Good bye! When I tell you that I have fifty-eight
on manufacturing families anxious to understand the details of the
Coffee Cultivation question, this morning, I need not apologise for
ittle leisure."
urprised by Caddy's being in low spirits, when we went down-stairs;
ding afresh on my neck, or by her saying she would far rather have
than treated with such indifference, or by her confiding to me that
oor in clothes, that how she was ever to be married creditably she
I gradually cheered her up, by dwelling on the many things she
her unfortunate father, and for Peepy, when she had a home of her
ally we went down-stairs into the damp dark kitchen, where Peepy
brothers and sisters were grovelling on the stone floor, and where we
ame of play with them, that to prevent myself from being quite torn
as obliged to fall back on my fairy tales. From time to time, I heard
the parlour overhead; and occasionally a violent tumbling about of
. The last effect I am afraid was caused by poor Mr. Jellyby's
y from the dining-table, and making rushes at the window, with the
hrowing himself into the area, whenever he made any new attempt
his affairs.
quietly home at night after the day's bustle, I thought a good deal of
gement, and felt confirmed in my hopes (in spite of the elder Mr.
that she would be the happier and better for it. And if there seemed
slender chance of her and her husband ever finding out what the

model of Deportment really was, why that was all for the best too, and who wish them to be wiser? I did not wish them to be any wiser, and indee half ashamed of not entirely believing in him myself. And I looked up stars, and thought about travellers in distant countries and the stars *they* sa hoped I might always be so blest and happy as to be useful to some one small way.

They were so glad to see me when I got home, as they always were, could have sat down and cried for joy, if that had not been a method of m myself disagreeable. Everybody in the house, from the lowest to the hi showed me such a bright face of welcome, and spoke so cheerily, and v happy to do anything for me, that I suppose there never was such a fortunat creature in the world.

We got into such a chatty state that night, through Ada and my gu drawing me out to tell them all about Caddy, that I went on prose, prose, pa for a length of time. At last I got up to my own room, quite red to think I had been holding forth; and then I heard a soft tap at my door. So I "Come in!" and there came in a pretty little girl, neatly dressed in mou who dropped a curtsey.

"If you please, miss," said the little girl, in a soft voice, "I am Charley.

"Why, so you are," said I, stooping down in astonishment, and giving kiss. "How glad am I to see you, Charley!"

"If you please, miss," pursued Charley, in the same soft voice, "I'm maid."

"Charley?"

"If you please, miss, I'm a present to you, with Mr. Jarndyce's love."

I sat down with my hand on Charley's neck, and looked at Charley.

"And O, miss," says Charley, clapping her hands, with the tears starting her dimpled cheeks, "Tom's at school, if you please, and learning so good! little Emma, she's with Mrs. Blinder, miss, a being took such care of! And he would have been at school—and Emma, she would have been left with Blinder—and me, I should have been here—all a deal sooner, miss; onl Jarndyce thought that Tom and Emma and me had better get a little us parting first, we was so small. Don't cry, if you please, miss!"

"I can't help it, Charley."

"No, miss, nor I can't help it," says Charley. "And if you please, Mr. Jarndyce's love, and he thinks you'll like to teach me now and then. A you please, Tom and Emma and me is to see each other once a month. An so happy and so thankful, miss," cried Charley with a heaving heart, "an try to be such a good maid!"

"O Charley dear, never forget who did all this!"

"No, miss, I never will. Nor Tom won't. Nor yet Emma. It was all miss."

"I have known nothing of it. It was Mr. Jarndyce, Charley."

"Yes, miss, but it was all done for the love of you, and that you might l mistress. If you please, miss, I am a little present with his love, and it w done for the love of you. Me and Tom was to be sure to remember it."

Charley dried her eyes, and entered on her functions: going in her ma little way about and about the room, and folding up everything she could l hands upon. Presently, Charley came creeping back to my side, and said:

"O don't cry, if you please, miss."

And I said again, "I can't help it, Charley."

And Charley said again, "No, miss, nor I can't help it." And so, after did cry for joy indeed, and so did she.

CHAPTER XXIV.

AN APPEAL CASE.

As soon as Richard and I had held the conversation of which I have given an account, Richard communicated the state of his mind to Mr. Jarndyce. I doubt if my guardian were altogether taken by surprise, when he received the representation; though it caused him much uneasiness and disappointment. He and Richard were often closeted together, late at night and early in the morning, and passed whole days in London, and had innumerable appointments with Mr. Kenge, and laboured through a quantity of disagreeable business. While they were thus employed, my guardian, though he underwent considerable inconvenience from the state of the wind, and rubbed his head so constantly that not a single hair upon it ever rested in its right place, was as genial with Ada and me as at any other time, but maintained a steady reserve on these matters. And as our utmost endeavours could only elicit from Richard himself sweeping assurances that everything was going on capitally, and that it really was all right at last, our anxiety was not much relieved by him.

We learnt, however, as the time went on, that a new application was made to the Lord Chancellor on Richard's behalf, as an Infant and a Ward, and I don't know what; and that there was a quantity of talking; and that the Lord Chancellor described him, in open court, as a vexatious and capricious infant; and that the matter was adjourned and readjourned, and referred, and reported on, and petitioned about, until Richard began to doubt (as he told us) whether, if he entered the army at all, it would not be as a veteran of seventy or eighty years of age. At last an appointment was made for him to see the Lord Chancellor again in his private room, and there the Lord Chancellor very seriously reproved him for trifling with time, and not knowing his mind—"a pretty good joke, I think," said Richard, "from that quarter!"—and at last it was settled that his application should be granted. His name was entered at the Horse Guards, as an applicant for an Ensign's commission; the purchase-money was deposited at an Agent's; and Richard, in his usual characteristic way, plunged into a violent course of military study, and got up at five o'clock every morning to practise the broad-sword exercise.

Thus, vacation succeeded term, and term succeeded vacation. We sometimes heard of Jarndyce and Jarndyce, as being in the paper or out of the paper, or as being to be mentioned, or as being to be spoken to; and it came on, and it went off. Richard, who was now in a Professor's house in London, was able to be with us less frequently than before; my guardian still maintained the same reserve; and so time passed until the commission was obtained, and Richard received directions with it to join a regiment in Ireland.

He arrived post-haste with the intelligence one evening, and had a long conference with my guardian. Upwards of an hour elapsed before my guardian put his head into the room where Ada and I were sitting, and said, "Come in, my dears!" We went in, and found Richard, whom we had last seen in high spirits, leaning on the chimney-piece, looking mortified and angry.

"Rick and I, Ada," said Mr. Jarndyce, "are not quite of one mind. Come, come, Rick, put a brighter face upon it!"

"You are very hard with me, sir," said Richard. "The harder, because you have been so considerate to me in all other respects, and have done me kindnesses that I can never acknowledge. I never could have been set right without you, sir."

"Well, well!" said Mr. Jarndyce, "I want to set you more rig
want to set you more right with yourself."

"I hope you will excuse my saying, sir," returned Richard in a fiery
yet respectfully, "that I think I am the best judge about myself."

"I hope you will excuse my saying, my dear Rick," observed Mr.
with the sweetest cheerfulness and good humour, "that it's quite natu
to think so, but I don't think so. I must do my duty, Rick, or you co
care for me in cool blood; and I hope you will always care for me,
hot."

Ada had turned so pale, that he made her sit down in his reading-chai
beside her.

"It's nothing, my dear," he said, "it's nothing. Rick and I have o
friendly difference, which we must state to you, for you are the theme.
are afraid of what's coming."

"I am not indeed, cousin John," replied Ada, with a smile, "if it i
from you."

"Thank you, my dear. Do you give me a minute's calm attention
looking at Rick. And, little woman, do you likewise. My dear girl,
his hand on hers, as it lay on the side of the easy-chair, "you recollec
we had, we four, when the little woman told me of a little love affair?"

"It is not likely that either Richard or I can ever forget your kind
day, cousin John."

"I can never forget it," said Richard.

"And I can never forget it," said Ada.

"So much the easier what I have to say, and so much the easier
agree," returned my guardian, his face irradiated by the gentleness and l
his heart. "Ada, my bird, you should know that Rick has now chose
fession for the last time. All that he has of certainty will be expended
is fully equipped. He has exhausted his resources, and is bound hencefo
the tree he has planted."

"Quite true that I have exhausted my present resources, and I am quit
to know it. But what I have of certainty, sir," said Richard, "is not all

"Rick, Rick!" cried my guardian, with a sudden terror in his mann
an altered voice, and putting up his hands as if he would have stopped
"for the love of God, don't found a hope or expectation on the famil
Whatever you do on this side the grave, never give one lingering glance
the horrible phantom that has haunted us so many years. Better to borro
to beg, better to die!"

We were all startled by the fervour of this warning. Richard bit hi
held his breath, and glanced at me, as if he felt, and knew that I felt
much he needed it.

"Ada, my dear," said Mr. Jarndyce, recovering his cheerfulness, "t
strong words of advice; but I live in Bleak House, and have seen a si
Enough of that. All Richard had, to start him in the race of life, is
I recommend to him and you, for his sake and your own, that he shoul
from us with the understanding that there is no sort of contract betwee
must go further. I will be plain with you both. You were to confide
me, and I will confide freely in you. I ask you wholly to relinquish, for
sent, any tie but your relationship."

"Better to say at once, sir," returned Richard, "that you renounce
fidence in me, and that you advise Ada to do the same."

"Better to say nothing of the sort, Rick, because I don't mean it."

"*You think* I have begun ill, sir," retorted Richard. "I *have*, I kno

' I hoped you would begin, and how go on, I told you when we spoke of
ngs last," said Mr. Jarndyce, in a cordial and encouraging manner.
ave not made that beginning yet; but there is a time for all things, and
ıot gone by—rather, it is just now fully come. Make a clear beginning
:r. You two (very young, my dears) are cousins. As yet, you are
nore. What more may come, must come of being worked out, Rick;
ooner."
are very hard with me, sir," said Richard. "Harder than I could have
you would be."
lear boy," said Mr. Jarndyce, "I am harder with myself when I do any-
.t gives you pain. You have your remedy in your own hands. Ada, it
for him that he should be free, and that there should be no youthful en-
t between you. Rick, it is better for her, much better; you owe it to
me! Each of you will do what is best for the other, if not what is best
elves."
/ is it best, sir?" returned Richard, hastily. "It was not, when we
ur hearts to you. You did not say so, then."
ıve had experience since. I don't blame you, Rick—but I have had
ce since."
mean of me, sir."
l! Yes, of both of you," said Mr. Jarndyce, kindly. "The time is not
your standing pledged to one another. It is not right, and I must not
: it. Come, come, my young cousins, begin afresh! Bygones shall be
, and a new page turned for you to write your lives in."
rd gave an anxious glance at Ada, but said nothing.
ve avoided saying one word to either of you, or to Esther," said Mr. Jarn-
ntil now, in order that we might be open as the day, and all on equal
I now affectionately advise, I now most earnestly entreat, you two, to part
ame here. Leave all else to time, truth, and steadfastness. If you do
:, you will do wrong; and you will have made me do wrong, in ever
you together."
silence succeeded.
ain Richard," said Ada, then, raising her blue eyes tenderly to his face,
hat our cousin John has said, I think no choice is left us. Your mind
quite at ease about me; for you will leave me here under his care, and
ure that I can have nothing to wish for; quite sure, if I guide myself by
e. I—I don't doubt, cousin Richard," said Ada, a little confused, "that
very fond of me, and I—I don't think you will fall in love with anybody
at I should like you to consider well about it, too; as I should like you to
things very happy. You may trust in me, cousin Richard. I am not at
geable; but I am not unreasonable, and should never blame you. Even
nay be sorry to part; and in truth I am very, very sorry, Richard, though
t's for your welfare. I shall always think of you affectionately, and often
ou with Esther, and—and perhaps you will sometimes think a little of me,
Richard. So now," said Ada, going up to him and giving him her
g hand, "we are only cousins again, Richard—for the time perhaps—and
r a blessing on my dear cousin, wherever he goes!"
strange to me that Richard should not be able to forgive my guardian,
taining the very same opinion of him which he himself had expressed of
n much stronger terms to me. But, it was certainly the case. I observed,
at regret, that from this hour he never was as free and open with Mr.
as he had been before. He had every reason given him to be so, but he
and, solely on his side, an estrangement began to arise between them.

In the business of preparation and equipment he soon lost himself, and even l
grief at parting from Ada, who remained in Hertfordshire, while he, Mr. Jarndy
and I went up to London for a week. He remembered her by fits and starts, ev
with bursts of tears; and at such times would confide to me the heaviest se
reproaches. But, in a few minutes he would recklessly conjure up some mi
finable means by which they were both to be made rich and happy for ever, a
would become as gay as possible.

It was a busy time, and I trotted about with him all day long, buying a vari
of things, of which he stood in need. Of the things he would have bought, if
had been left to his own ways, I say nothing. He was perfectly confidential wi
me, and often talked so sensib igly about his faults and his vigor
resolutions, and dwelt so much ncouragement he derived from the
conversations, that I could never tired if I had tried.

There used, in that week, to ward and forward to our lodging,
fence with Richard, a person v erly been a cavalry soldier; he was
fine bluff-looking man, of a fa ng, with whom Richard had practis
for some months. I heard so him, not only from Richard, but fr
my guardian too, that I was p e room, with my work, one morni
after breakfast when he came.

"Good morning, Mr. George," said my guardian, who happened to be alo
with me. "Mr. Carstone will be here directly. Meanwhile, Miss Summerson
very happy to see you, I know. Sit down."

He sat down, a little disconcerted by my presence, I thought; and, witho
looking at me, drew his heavy sunburnt hand across and across his upper lip.

"You are as punctual as the sun," said Mr. Jarndyce.

"Military time, sir," he replied. "Force of habit. A mere habit in me, s
I am not at all business-like."

"Yet you have a large establishment, too, I am told?" said Mr. Jarndyce.

"Not much of a one, sir. I keep a shooting gallery, but not much of a one.

"And what kind of a shot, and what kind of a swordsman, do you make of M
Carstone?" said my guardian.

"Pretty good, sir," he replied, folding his arms upon his broad chest, a
looking very large. "If Mr. Carstone was to give his full mind to it, he wo
come out very good."

"But he don't, I suppose?" said my guardian.

"He did at first, sir, but not afterwards. Not his full mind. Perhaps he h
something else upon it—some young lady, perhaps." His bright dark e
glanced at me for the first time.

"He has not me upon his mind, I assure you, Mr. George," said I, laughi
"though you seem to suspect me."

He reddened a little through his brown, and made me a trooper's bow. "
offence, I hope, miss. I am one of the Roughs."

"Not at all," said I. "I take it as a compliment."

If he had not looked at me before, he looked at me now, in three or four qu
successive glances. "I beg your pardon, sir," he said to my guardian, wit
manly kind of diffidence, "but you did me the honour to mention the young lad
name——"

"Miss Summerson."

"Miss Summerson," he repeated, and looked at me again.

"Do you know the name?" I asked.

"No, miss. To my knowledge, I never heard it. I thought I had seen
somewhere."

"I think not," I returned, raising my head from my work to look at him;

is something so genuine in his speech and manner that I was glad of the
ıity. "I remember faces very well."
lo I, miss!" he returned, meeting my look with the fulness of his dark
l broad forehead. "Humph! What set me off, now, upon that!"
ınce more reddening through his brown, and being disconcerted by his
) remember the association, brought my guardian to his relief.
'e you many pupils, Mr. George?"
y vary in their number, sir. Mostly, they're but a small lot to live by."
l what classes of chance people come to practise at your gallery?"
sorts, sir. Natives and foreigners. From gentlemen to 'prentices. I
d French women come, before now, and show themselves dabs at pistol-
;. Mad people out of number, of course—but *they* go everywhere, where
s stand open."
ple don't come with grudges, and schemes of finishing their practice with
ets, I hope?" said my guardian, smiling.
much of that, sir, though that *has* happened. Mostly they come for skill
eness. Six of one, and half-a-dozen of the other. I beg your pardon,"
George, sitting stiffly upright, and squaring an elbow on each knee, "but
: you're a Chancery suitor, if I have heard correct?"
ı sorry to say I am."
ıve had one of *your* compatriots in my time, sir."
:hancery suitor?" returned my guardian. "How was that?"
y, the man was so badgered, and worried, and tortured, by being knocked
ɔm post to pillar, and from pillar to post," said Mr. George, "that he got
ɔrts. I don't believe he had any idea of taking aim at anybody; but he
hat condition of resentment and violence, that he would come and pay for
ls, and fire away till he was red hot. One day I said to him when there
ody by, and he had been talking to me angrily about his wrongs, 'If this
is a safety-valve, comrade, well and good; but I don't altogether like
ng so bent upon it, in your present state of mind; I'd rather you took to
ıg else.' I was on my guard for a blow, he was that passionate; but he
it in very good part, and left off directly. We shook hands, and struck
t of friendship."
at was that man?" asked my guardian, in a new tone of interest.
y, he began by being a small Shropshire farmer, before they made a baited
ıim," said Mr. George.
s his name Gridley?"
'as, sir."
eorge directed another succession of quick bright glances at me, as my
ı and I exchanged a word or two of surprise at the coincidence; and I
: explained to him how we knew the name. He made me another of his
bows, in acknowledgment of what he called my condescension.
n't know," he said, as he looked at me, "what it is that sets me off again
ɔosh! what's my head running against!" He passed one of his heavy
er his crisp dark hair, as if to sweep the broken thoughts out of his mind;
a little forward, with one arm akimbo and the other resting on his leg,
in a brown study at the ground.
ı sorry to learn that the same state of mind has got this Gridley into new
, and that he is in hiding," said my guardian.
: am told, sir," returned Mr. George, still musing and looking on the
"So I am told."
ı don't know where?"
sir," returned the *trooper, lifting* up his eyes and coming out of his reverie.

"I can't say anything about him. He will be worn out soon, I expect. Y file a strong man's heart away for a good many years, but it will tell all of den at last."

Richard's entrance stopped the conversation. Mr. George rose, made other of his soldierly bows, wished my guardian a good day, and strode out of the room.

This was the morning of the day appointed for Richard's departure. V no more purchases to make now; I had completed all his packing early afternoon; and our time was disengaged until night, when he was to go to pool for Holyhead. Jarndyce and Jarndyce being again expected to c that day, Richard proposed to me that we should go down to the Court a what passed. As it was his last day, and he was eager to go, and I had been there, I gave my consent, and we walked down to Westminster, wh Court was then sitting. We beguiled the way with arrangements concern letters that Richard was to write to me, and the letters that I was to write and with a great many hopeful projects. My guardian knew where w going, and therefore was not with us.

When we came to the Court, there was the Lord Chancellor—the same had seen in his private room in Lincoln's Inn—sitting in great state and on the bench; with the mace and seals on a red table below him, and an in dot no-egay, like a little garden, which scented the whole Court. Below th again, was a long row of solicitors, with bundles of papers on the matting feet; and then there were the gentlemen of the bar in wigs and gowns awake and some asleep, and one talking, and nobody paying much atten what he said. The Lord Chancellor leaned back in his very easy chair, v elbow on the cushioned arm, and his forehead resting on his hand; some who were present, dozed; some read the newspapers; some walked ab whispered in groups: all seemed perfectly at their ease, by no means in a very unconcerned, and extremely comfortable.

To see everything going on so smoothly, and to think of the roughness suitors' lives and deaths; to see all that full dress and ceremony, and to the waste, and want, and beggared misery it represented; to consider that the sickness of hope deferred was raging in so many hearts, this polite sho calmly on from day to day, and year to year, in such good order and com to behold the Lord Chancellor, and the whole array of practitioners un looking at one another and at the spectators, as if nobody had ever heard that England the name in which they were assembled was a bitter jest: was universal horror, contempt, and indignation; was known for something so and bad, that little short of a miracle could bring any good out of it to an this was so curious and self-contradictory to me, who had no experience of it was at first incredible, and I could not comprehend it. I sat where Rich me, and tried to listen, and looked about me; but there seemed to be no in the whole scene, except poor little Miss Flite, the mad woman, standin bench, and nodding at it.

Miss Flite soon espied us, and came to where we sat. She gave me a g welcome to her domain, and indicated, with much gratification and pride, cipal attractions. Mr. Kenge also came to speak to us, and did the honour place in much the same way; with the kind modesty of a proprietor. It a very good day for a visit, he said; he would have preferred the first day c but it was imposing, it was imposing.

When we had been there half an hour or so, the case in progress—if I u a phrase so ridiculous in such a connexion—seemed to die out of its own v *without coming*, or being by anybody expected to come, to any result. Th

Chancellor then threw down a bundle of papers from his desk to the gentlemen below him, and somebody said, "JARNDYCE AND JARNDYCE." Upon this there was a buzz, and a laugh, and a general withdrawal of the by-standers, and a bringing in of great heaps, and piles, and bags and bags-full of papers.

I think it came on "for further directions,"—about some bill of costs, to the best of my understanding, which was confused enough. But I counted twenty-three gentlemen in wigs, who said they were "in it;" and none of them appeared to understand it much better than I. They chatted about it with the Lord Chancellor, and contradicted and explained among themselves, and some of them said it was this way, and some of them said it was that way, and some of them jocosely proposed to read huge volumes of affidavits, and there was more buzzing and laughing, and everybody concerned was in a state of idle entertainment, and nothing could be made of it by anybody. After an hour or so of this, and a good many speeches being begun and cut short, it was "referred back for the present," as Mr. Kenge said, and the papers were bundled up again, before the clerks had finished bringing them in.

I glanced at Richard, on the termination of these hopeless proceedings, and was shocked to see the worn look of his handsome young face. "It can't last for ever, Dame Durden. Better luck next time!" was all he said.

I had seen Mr. Guppy bringing in papers, and arranging them for Mr. Kenge; and he had seen me and made me a forlorn bow, which rendered me desirous to get out of the Court. Richard had given me his arm, and was taking me away, when Mr. Guppy came up.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Carstone," said he in a whisper, "and Miss Summerson's also; but there's a lady here, a friend of mine, who knows her, and wishes to have the pleasure of shaking hands." As he spoke, I saw before me, as if she had started into bodily shape from my remembrance, Mrs. Rachael of my godmother's house.

"How do you do, Esther?" said she. "Do you recollect me?"

I gave her my hand, and told her yes, and that she was very little altered.

"I wonder you remember those times, Esther," she returned with her old asperity. "They are changed now. Well! I am glad to see you, and glad you are not too proud to know me." But, indeed she seemed disappointed that I was not.

"Proud, Mrs. Rachael!" I remonstrated.

"I am married, Esther," she returned, coldly correcting me, "and am Mrs. Chadband. Well! I wish you good day, and I hope you'll do well."

Mr. Guppy, who had been attentive to this short dialogue, heaved a sigh in my ear, and elbowed his own and Mrs. Rachael's way through the confused little crowd of people coming in and going out, which we were in the midst of, and which the change in the business had brought together. Richard and I were making our way through it, and I was yet in the first chill of the late unexpected recognition, when I saw, coming towards us, but not seeing us, no less a person than Mr. George. He made nothing of the people about him as he tramped on, staring over their heads into the body of the Court.

"George!" said Richard, as I called his attention to him.

"You are well met, sir," he returned. "And you, miss. Could you point a person out for me, I want? I don't understand these places."

Turning as he spoke, and making an easy way for us, he stopped when we were out of the press, in a corner behind a great red curtain.

"There's a little cracked old woman," he began, "that——"

I put up my finger, for Miss Flite was close by me; having kept beside me all the time, and having called the attention of several of her legal acquaintance to

me (as I had overheard to my confusion), by whispering in their ears, "Hush! Fitz-Jarndyce on my left!"

"Hem!" said Mr. George. "You remember, miss, that we passed some conversation on a certain man this morning?—Gridley," in a low whisper behind his hand.

"Yes," said I.

"He is hiding at my place. I couldn't mention it. Hadn't his authority. He is on his last march, miss, and has a whim to see her. He says they can feel for one another, and she has been almost as good as a friend to him here. I came down to look for her; for when I sat by Gridley this afternoon, I seemed to hear the roll of the muffled drums."

"Shall I tell her?" said I.

"Would you be so good?" he returned, with a glance of something like apprehension at Miss Flite. "It's a Providence I met you, miss; I doubt if I should have known how to get on with that lady." And he put one hand in his breast, and stood upright in a martial attitude, as I informed little Miss Flite, in her ear, of the purport of his kind errand.

"My angry friend from Shropshire! Almost as celebrated as myself!" she exclaimed. "Now really! My dear, I will wait upon him with the greatest pleasure."

"He is living concealed at Mr. George's," said I. "Hush! This is Mr. George."

"In—deed!" returned Miss Flite. "Very proud to have the honour! A military man, my dear. You know, a perfect General!" she whispered to me.

Poor Miss Flite deemed it necessary to be so courtly and polite, as a mark of her respect for the army, and to curtsey so very often, that it was no easy matter to get her out of the Court. When this was at last done, and addressing Mr. George, as "General," she gave him her arm, to the great entertainment of some idlers who were looking on, he was so discomposed, and begged me so respectfully "not to desert him," that I could not make up my mind to do it; especially as Miss Flite was always tractable with me, and as she too said, "Fitz-Jarndyce, my dear, you will accompany us, of course." As Richard seemed quite willing, and even anxious, that we should see them safely to their destination, we agreed to do so. And as Mr. George informed us that Gridley's mind had run on Mr. Jarndyce all the afternoon, after hearing of their interview in the morning, I wrote a hasty note in pencil to my guardian to say where we were gone, and why. Mr. George sealed it at a coffee-house, that it might lead to no discovery, and we sent it off by a ticket-porter.

We then took a hackney-coach, and drove away to the neighbourhood of Leicester Square. We walked through some narrow courts, for which Mr. George apologised, and soon came to the Shooting Gallery, the door of which was closed. As he pulled a bell-handle which hung by a chain to the door-post, a very respectable old gentleman, with grey hair, wearing spectacles, and dressed in a black spencer and gaiters and a broad-brimmed hat, and carrying a large gold-headed cane, addressed him.

"I ask your pardon, my good friend," said he; "but is this George's Shooting Gallery?"

"It is, sir," returned Mr. George, glancing up at the great letters in which that inscription was painted on the whitewashed wall.

"Oh! To be sure!" said the old gentleman, following his eyes. "Thank you. Have you rung the bell?"

"My name is George, sir, and I have rung the bell."

"Oh, indeed?" said the old gentleman. "Your name is George? Then I am *here as soon as* you, you see. You came for me, no doubt?"

"No, sir. You have the advantage of me."

"Oh, indeed?" said the old gentleman. "Then it was your young man who came for me. I am a physician, and was requested—five minutes ago—to come and visit a sick man, at George's Shooting Gallery."

"The muffled drums," said Mr. George, turning to Richard and me, and gravely shaking his head. "It's quite correct, sir. Will you please to walk in."

The door being at that moment opened, by a very singular-looking little man in a green baize cap and apron, whose face, and hands, and dress, were blackened all over, we passed along a dreary passage into a large building with bare brick walls; where there were targets, and guns, and swords, and other things of that kind. When we had all arrived here, the physician stopped, and, taking off his hat, appeared to vanish by magic, and to leave another and quite a different man in his place.

"Now look'ee here, George," said the man, turning quickly round upon him, and tapping him on the breast with a large forefinger. "You know me, and I know you. You're a man of the world, and I'm a man of the world. My name's Bucket, as you are aware, and I have got a peace-warrant against Gridley. You have kept him out of the way a long time, and you have been artful in it, and it does you credit."

Mr. George, looking hard at him, bit his lip and shook his head.

"Now, George," said the other, keeping close to him, "you're a sensible man, and a well-conducted man; that's what *you* are, beyond a doubt. And mind you, I don't talk to you as a common character, because you have served your country, and you know that when duty calls we must obey. Consequently, you're very far from wanting to give trouble. If I required assistance, you'd assist me; that's what you'd do. Phil Squod, don't you go a-sidling round the gallery like that;" the dirty little man was shuffling about with his shoulder against the wall, and his eyes on the intruder, in a manner that looked threatening: "because I know you, and won't have it."

"Phil!" said Mr. George.

"Yes, guv'ner."

"Be quiet."

The little man, with a low growl, stood still.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said Mr. Bucket, "you'll excuse anything that may appear to be disagreeable in this, for my name's Inspector Bucket of the Detective, and I have a duty to perform. George, I know where my man is, because I was on the roof last night, and saw him through the skylight, and you along with him. He is in there, you know," pointing; "that's where *he* is—on a sofy. Now I must see my man, and I must tell my man to consider himself in custody; but, you knew me, and you know I don't want to take any uncomfortable measures. You give me your word, as from one man to another (and an old soldier, mind you, likewise!), that it's honourable between us two, and I'll accommodate you to the utmost of my power."

"I give it," was the reply. "But it wasn't handsome in you, Mr. Bucket."

"Gammon, George! Not handsome?" said Mr. Bucket, tapping him on his broad breast again, and shaking hands with him. "I don't say it wasn't handsome in you to keep my man so close, do I? Be equally good-tempered to me, old boy! Old William Tell, Old Shaw, the Life Guardsman! Why, he's a model of the whole British army in himself, ladies and gentlemen. I'd give a fifty-pun' note to be such a figure of a man!"

The affair being brought to this head, Mr. George, after a little consideration, proposed to go in first to his comrade (as he called him), taking Miss Flite with him. Mr. Bucket agreeing, they went away to the further end of the gallery,

leaving us sitting and standing by a table covered with guns. Mr. Bucket took this opportunity of entering into a little light conversation: asking me if I were afraid of fire-arms, as most young ladies were; asking Richard if he were a good shot; asking Phil Squod which he considered the best of those rifles, and what it might be worth, first-hand; telling him, in return, that it was a pity he ever gave way to his temper, for he was naturally so amiable, that he might have been a young woman; and making himself generally agreeable.

After a time he followed us to the further end of the gallery, and Richard and I were going quietly away, when Mr. George came after us. He said that if we had no objection to see his comrade, he would take a visit from us very kindly. The words had hardly passed his lips, when the bell was rung, and my guardian appeared; "on the chance," he slightly observed, "of being able to do any little thing for a poor fellow involved in the same misfortune as himself." We all four went back together, and went into the place where Gridley was.

It was a bare room, partitioned off from the gallery with unpainted wood. As the screening was not more than eight or ten feet high, and only enclosed the sides, not the top, the rafters of the high gallery roof were overhead, and the skylight through which Mr. Bucket had looked down. The sun was low—near setting—and its light came redly in above, without descending to the ground. Upon a plain canvas-covered sofa lay the man from Shropshire—dressed much as we had seen him last, but so changed, that at first I recognised no likeness in his colourless face to what I recollected.

He had been still writing in his hiding-place, and still dwelling on his grievances, hour after hour. A table and some shelves were covered with manuscript papers, and with worn pens, and a medley of such tokens. Touchingly and awfully drawn together, he and the little mad woman were side by side, and, as it were, alone. She sat on a chair holding his hand, and none of us went close to them.

His voice had faded, with the old expression of his face, with his strength, with his anger, with his resistance to the wrongs that had at last subdued him. The faintest shadow of an object full of form and colour, is such a picture of it, as he was of the man from Shropshire whom we had spoken with before.

He inclined his head to Richard and me, and spoke to my guardian.

"Mr. Jarndyce, it is very kind of you to come to see me. I am not long to be seen, I think. I am very glad to take your hand, sir. You are a good man, superior to injustice, and God knows I honour you."

They shook hands earnestly, and my guardian said some words of comfort to him.

"It may seem strange to you, sir," returned Gridley; "I should not have liked to see you, if this had been the first time of our meeting. But, you know I made a fight for it, you know I stood up with my single hand against them all, you know I told them the truth to the last, and told them what they were, and what they had done to me: so I don't mind your seeing me, this wreck."

"You have been courageous with them, many and many a time," returned my guardian.

"Sir, I have been;" with a faint smile. "I told you what would come of it, when I ceased to be so; and, see here! Look at us—look at us!" He drew the hand Miss Flite held, through her arm, and brought her something nearer to him.

"This ends it. Of all my old associations, of all my old pursuits and hopes, of all the living and the dead world, this one poor soul alone comes natural to me, and I am fit for. There is a tie of many suffering years between us two, and it is the only tie I ever had on earth that Chancery has not broken."

pt my blessing, Gridley," said Miss Flite, in tears. "Accept my
"

ught, boastfully, that they never could break my heart, Mr. Jarndyce.
solved that they should not. I did believe that I could, and would,
nem with being the mockery they were, until I died of some bodily
But I am worn out. How long I have been wearing out, I don't
seemed to break down in an hour. I hope they may never come to
t. I hope everybody, here, will lead them to believe that I died defying
nsistently and perseveringly, as I did through so many years."
Mr. Bucket, who was sitting in a corner, by the door, good-naturedly
uch consolation as he could administer.
e, come!" he said from his corner. "Don't go on in that way, Mr.
You are only a little low. We are all of us a little low, sometimes. I
ld up, hold up! You'll lose your temper with the whole round of 'em,
l again; and I shall take you on a score of warrants yet, if I have luck."
ly shook his head.
't shake your head," said Mr. Bucket. "Nod it; that's what I want to
do. Why, Lord bless your soul, what times we have had together!
I seen you in the Fleet over and over again, for contempt? Haven't I
o Court, twen-ty afternoons, for no other purpose than to see you pin the
or like a bull-dog? Don't you remember, when you first began to
the lawyers, and the peace was sworn against you two or three times a
Ask the little old lady there; she has been always present. Hold up,
lley, hold up, sir!"
it are you going to do about him?" asked George, in a low voice.
a't know yet," said Bucket, in the same tone. Then resuming his en-
nent, he pursued aloud:
n out, Mr. Gridley? After dodging me for all these weeks, and forcing
mb the roof here like a Tom Cat, and to come to see you as a Doctor?
't like being worn out. I should think not! Now I tell you what you
You want excitement, you know, to keep *you* up; that's what *you* want.
ised to it, and you can't do without it. I couldn't myself. Very well,
re's this warrant got by Mr. Tulkinghorn of Lincoln's Inn Fields, and
nto half-a-dozen counties since. What do you say to coming along with
this warrant, and having a good angry argument before the Magistrates?
you good; it'll freshen you up, and get you into training for another
ie Chancellor. Give in? Why, I am surprised to hear a man of your
alk of giving in. You mustn't do that. You're half the fun of the fair,
ourt of Chancery. George, you lend Mr. Gridley a hand, and let's see
ther he won't be better up than down."
s very weak," said the trooper, in a low voice.
?" returned Bucket, anxiously. "I only want to rouse him. I don't
e an old acquaintance giving in like this. It would cheer him up more
thing, if I could make him a little waxy with me. He's welcome to
me, right and left, if he likes. I shall never take advantage of it."
of rang with a scream from Miss Flite, which still rings in my ears.
, Gridley!" she cried, as he fell heavily and calmly back from before her,
hout my blessing. After so many years!"

m was down, the light had gradually stolen from the roof, and the shadow
t upward. But, to me, the shadow of that pair, one living and one dead,
er on Richard's departure, than the darkness of the darkest night. And
Richard's farewell words I heard it echoed:

"Of all my old associations, of all my old pursuits and hopes, of all and the dead world, this one poor soul alone comes natural to me, and for. There is a tie of many suffering years between us two, and it is th I ever had on earth that Chancery has not broken!"

CHAPTER XXV.

MRS. SNAGSBY SEES IT ALL.

THERE is disquietude in Cook's Court, Cursitor Street. Black suspic in that peaceful region. The mass of Cook's-Courtiers are in their usu mind, no better and no worse; but, Mr. Snagsby is changed, and his litt knows it.

For, Tom-all-Alone's and Lincoln's Inn Fields persist in harnessing th a pair of ungovernable coursers, to the chariot of Mr. Snagsby's imagina Mr. Bucket drives; and the passengers are Jo and Mr. Tulkinghorn complete equipage whirls through the Law Stationery business at wild round the clock. Even in the little front kitchen where the family meals it rattles away at a smoking pace from the dinner-table, when Mr. Snag in carving the first slice of the leg of mutton baked with potatoes, and the kitchen wall.

Mr. Snagsby cannot make out what it is that he has had to do with, thing is wrong, somewhere; but what something, what may come of it, when, and from which unthought of and unheard of quarter, is the puz life. His remote impressions of the robes and coronets, the stars and ga sparkle through the surface-dust of Mr. Tulkinghorn's chambers; his for the mysteries presided over by that best and closest of his customers, the Inns of Court, all Chancery Lane, and all the legal neighbourhoo hold in awe; his remembrance of Detective Mr. Bucket with his forefi his confidential manner impossible to be evaded or declined; persuade he is a party to some dangerous secret, without knowing what it is. An fearful peculiarity of this condition that, at any hour of his daily life, at an of the shop-door, at any pull of the bell, at any entrance of a messeng delivery of a letter, the secret may take air and fire, explode, and blow Bucket only knows whom.

For which reason, whenever a man unknown comes into the shop (as r unknown do), and says, "Is Mr. Snagsby in?" or words to that innoc Mr. Snagsby's heart knocks hard at his guilty breast. He undergoes from such inquiries, that when they are made by boys he revenges h flipping at their ears over the counter, and asking the young dogs what t by it, and why they can't speak out at once? More impracticable men persist in walking into Mr. Snagsby's sleep, and terrifying him with unac questions; so that often, when the cock at the little dairy in Cursitor Stre out in his usual absurd way about the morning, Mr. Snagsby finds him crisis of nightmare, with his little woman shaking him, and saying "W matter with the man!"

The little woman herself is not the least item in his difficulty. To kno is always keeping a secret from her: that he has, under all circumstance ceal and hold fast a tender double tooth, which her sharpness is ever read *out of his head*: gives Mr. Snagsby, in her dentistical presence, much of

a dog who has a reservation from his master, and will look anywhere rather than meet his eye.

These various signs and tokens, marked by the little woman, are not lost upon her. They impel her to say, "Snagsby has something on his mind!" And thus suspicion gets into Cook's Court, Cursitor Street. From suspicion to jealousy, Mrs. Snagsby finds the road as natural and short as from Cook's Court to Chancery Lane. And thus jealousy gets into Cook's Court, Cursitor Street. Once there (and it was always lurking thereabout), it is very active and nimble in Mrs. Snagsby's breast—prompting her to nocturnal examinations of Mr. Snagsby's pockets; to secret perusals of Mr. Snagsby's letters; to private researches in the Day Book and Ledger, till, cash-box, and iron safe; to watchings at windows, listenings behind doors, and a general putting of this and that together by the wrong end.

Mrs. Snagsby is so perpetually on the alert, that the house becomes ghostly with creaking boards and rustling garments. The 'prentices think somebody may have been murdered there, in bygone times. Guster holds certain loose atoms of an idea (picked up at Tooting, where they were found floating among the orphans), that there is buried money underneath the cellar, guarded by an old man with a white beard, who cannot get out for seven thousand years, because he said the Lord's Prayer backwards.

"Who was Nimrod?" Mrs. Snagsby repeatedly inquires of herself. "Who was that lady—that creature? And who is that boy?" Now, Nimrod being as dead as the mighty hunter whose name Mrs. Snagsby has appropriated, and the lady being unproducible, she directs her mental eye, for the present, with redoubled vigilance, to the boy. "And who," quoth Mrs. Snagsby, for the thousand and first time "is that boy? Who is that ——!" And there Mrs. Snagsby is seized with an inspiration.

He has no respect for Mr. Chadband. No, to be sure, and he wouldn't have, of course. Naturally he wouldn't, under those contagious circumstances. He was invited and appointed by Mr. Chadband—why, Mrs. Snagsby heard it herself with her own ears!—to come back, and be told where he was to go, to be addressed by Mr. Chadband; and he never came! Why did he never come? Because he was told not to come. Who told him not to come? Who? Ha, ha! Mrs. Snagsby sees it all.

But happily (and Mrs. Snagsby tightly shakes her head and tightly smiles), that boy was met by Mr. Chadband yesterday in the streets; and that boy, as affording a subject which Mr. Chadband desires to improve for the spiritual delight of a select congregation, was seized by Mr. Chadband and threatened with being delivered over to the police, unless he showed the reverend gentleman where he lived, and unless he entered into, and fulfilled, an undertaking to appear in Cook's Court to-morrow night—"to—mor—row—night," Mrs. Snagsby repeats for mere emphasis, with another tight smile, and another tight shake of her head; and to-morrow night that boy will be here, and to-morrow night Mrs. Snagsby will have her eye upon him and upon some one else; and O you may walk a long while in your secret ways (says Mrs. Snagsby, with haughtiness and scorn), but you can't blind me!

Mrs. Snagsby sounds no timbrel in anybody's ears, but holds her purpose quietly, and keeps her counsel. To-morrow comes, the savoury preparations for the Old Trade come, the evening comes. Comes, Mr. Snagsby in his black coat; come, the Chadbands; come (when the gorging vessel is replete), the 'prentices and Guster, to be edified; comes, at last, with his slouching head, and his shuffle backward, and his shuffle forward, and his shuffle to the right, and his shuffle to the left, and his bit of fur cap in his muddy hand, which he picks as if it were

some mangy bird he had caught, and was plucking before eating raw, Jo, the very, very tough subject Mr. Chadband is to improve.

Mrs. Snagsby screws a watchful glance on Jo, as he is brought into the little drawing-room by Guster. He looks at Mr. Snagsby the moment he comes in. Aha! Why does he look at Mr. Snagsby? Mr. Snagsby looks at him. Why should he do that, but that Mrs. Snagsby sees it all? Why else should that look pass between them, why else should Mr. Snagsby be confused, and cough a signal cough behind his hand? It is as clear as crystal that Mr. Snagsby is that boy's father.

"Peace, my friends," says Chadband, rising and wiping the oily exudations from his reverend visage. "Peace be with us! My friends, why with us? Because," with his fat smile, "it cannot be against us, because it must be for us; because it is not hardening, because it is softening; because it does not make war like the hawk, but comes home untoe us like the dove. Therefore, my friends, peace be with us! My human boy, come forward!"

Stretching forth his flabby paw, Mr. Chadband lays the same on Jo's arm, and considers where to station him. Jo, very doubtful of his reverend friend's intentions, and not at all clear but that something practical and painful is going to be done to him, mutters, "You let me alone. I never said nothink to you. You let me alone."

"No, my young friend," says Chadband, smoothly, "I will not let you alone. And why? Because I am a harvest-labourer, because I am a toiler and a moiler, because you are delivered over untoe me, and are become as a precious instrument in my hands. My friends, may I so employ this instrument as to use it toe your advantage, toe your profit, toe your gain, toe your welfare, toe your enrichment! My young friend, sit upon this stool."

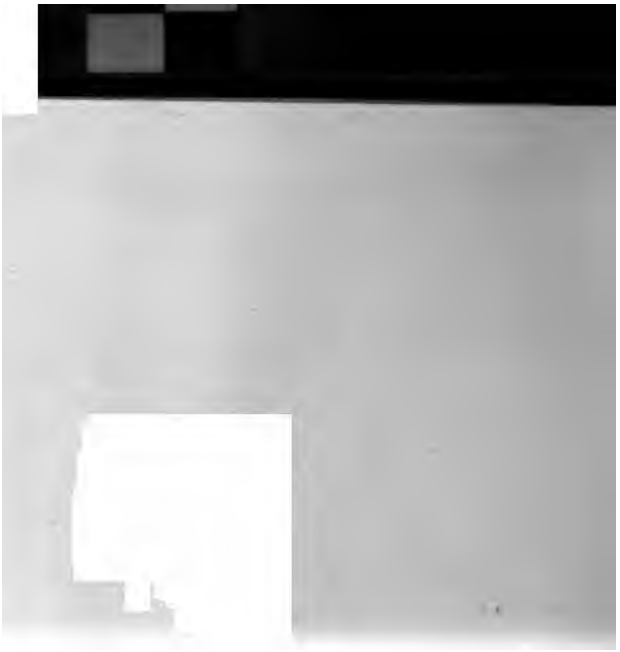
Jo, apparently possessed by an impression that the reverend gentleman wants to cut his hair, shields his head with both arms, and is got into the required position with great difficulty, and every possible manifestation of reluctance.

When he is at last adjusted like a lay-figure, Mr. Chadband, retiring behind the table, holds up his bear's-paw, and says, "My friends!" This is the signal for a general settlement of the audience. The 'prentices giggle internally, and nudge each other. Guster falls into a staring and vacant state, compounded of a stunned admiration of Mr. Chadband and pity for the friendless outcast whose condition touches her nearly. Mrs. Snagsby silently lays trains of gunpowder. Mrs. Chadband composes herself grimly by the fire, and warms her knees: finding that sensation favourable to the reception of eloquence.

It happens that Mr. Chadband has a pulpit habit of fixing some member of his congregation with his eye, and fatly arguing his points with that particular person; who is understood to be expected to be moved to an occasional grunt, groan, gasp, or other audible expression of inward working; which expression of inward working, being echoed by some elderly lady in the next pew, and so communicated, like a game of forfeits, through a circle of the more fermentable sinners present, serves the purpose of parliamentary cheering, and gets Mr. Chadband's steam up. From mere force of habit, Mr. Chadband in saying "My friends!" has rested his eye on Mr. Snagsby; and proceeds to make that ill-starred stationer, already sufficiently confused, the immediate recipient of his discourse.

"We have here among us, my friends," says Chadband, "a Gentile and a Heathen, a dweller in the tents of Tom-all-Alone's, and a mover-on upon the surface of the earth. We have here among us, my friends," and Mr. Chadband, untwisting the point with his dirty thumb-nail, bestows an oily smile on Mr. *Snagsby, signifying* that he will throw him an argumentative back-fall presently

Mr. Chadband improving a tough subject



ot already down, "a brother and a boy. Devoid of parents, devoid of
devoid of flocks and herds, devoid of gold and silver, and of precious
Now, my friends, why do I say he is devoid of these possessions?
Vhy is he?" Mr. Chadband states the question as if he were propound-
ıtirely new riddle, of much ingenuity and merit, to Mr. Snagsby, and
; him not to give it up.
agsby, greatly perplexed by the mysterious look he received just now
ittle woman—at about the period when Mr. Chadband mentioned the
ents—is tempted into modestly remarking, "I don't know, I'm sure,
which interruption, Mrs. Chadband glares, and Mrs. Snagsby says,
me!"
r a voice," says Chadband; "is it a still small voice, my friends? I
hough I fain would hope so——"
-h!" from Mrs. Snagsby.)
h says, I don't know. Then I will tell you why. I say this brother,
ere among us, is devoid of parents, devoid of relations, devoid of flocks
, devoid of gold, of silver, and of precious stones, because he is devoid
ıt that shines in upon some of us. What is that light? What is it? I
hat is that light?"
adband draws back his head and pauses, but Mr. Snagsby is not to be
to his destruction again. Mr. Chadband, leaning forward over the
rces what he has got to follow, directly into Mr. Snagsby, with the
il already mentioned.
" says Chadband, "the ray of rays, the sun of suns, the moon of moons,
f stars. It is the light of Terewth."
adband draws himself up again, and looks triumphantly at Mr. Snagsby,
ould be glad to know how he feels after that.
erewth," says Mr. Chadband, hitting him again. "Say not to me that
e lamp of lamps. I say to you, it is. I say to you, a million of times over,
is! I say to you that I will proclaim it to you, whether you like it or
, that the less you like it, the more I will proclaim it to you. With a
trumpet! I say to you that if you rear yourself against it, you shall
hall be bruised, you shall be battered, you shall be flawed, you shall be
"
esent effect of this flight of oratory—much admired for its general power
hadband's followers—being not only to make Mr. Chadband unplea-
rm, but to represent the innocent Mr. Snagsby in the light of a deter-
emy to virtue, with a forehead of brass and a heart of adamant, that
te tradesman becomes yet more disconcerted; and is in a very advanced
ow spirits and false position, when Mr. Chadband accidentally finishes

riends," he resumes, after dabbing his fat head for some time—and it
o such an extent that he seems to light his pocket-handkerchief at it,
ıokes, too, after every dab—"to pursue the subject we are endeavouring
lowly gifts to improve, let us in a spirit of love inquire what is that
to which I have alluded. For, my young friends," suddenly addressing
ices and Guster, to their consternation, "if I am told by the doctor that
ır castor-oil is good for me, I may naturally ask what is calomel, and
ıstor-oil. I may wish to be informed of that, before I dose myself with
with both. Now, my young friends, what is this Terewth, then?
ı a spirit of love), what is the common sort of Terewth—the working
the every-day wear, my young friends? Is it deception?"
-h!" from Mrs. Snagsby.)

"Is it suppression?"

(A shiver in the negative from Mrs. Snagsby.)

"Is it reservation?"

(A shake of the head from Mrs. Snagsby—very long and very tight.)

"No, my friends, it is neither of these. Neither of these names belongs to When this young Heathen now among us—who is now, my friends, asleep, t seal of indifference and perdition being set upon his eyelids; but do not wi him, for it is right that I should have to wrestle, and to combat and to strugg and to conquer, for his sake—when this young hardened Heathen told u story of a Cock, and of a Bull, and of a lady, and of a sovereign, was *that* Terewth? No. Or, if it was partly, was it wholly, and entirely? No, my frien no!"

If Mr. Snagsby could withstand his little woman's look, as it enters at his ey the windows of his soul, and searches the whole tenement, he were other than man he is. He cowers and droops.

"Or, my juvenile friends," says Chadband, descending to the level of th comprehension, with a very obtrusive demonstration, in his greasily meek sm of coming a long way down-stairs for the purpose, "if the master of this ho was to go forth into the city and there see an eel, and was to come back, and to call untoe him the mistress of this house, and was to say, 'Sarah, rejoice w me, for I have seen an elephant!' would *that* be Terewth?"

Mrs. Snagsby in tears.

"Or put it, my juvenile friends, that he saw an elephant, and returning s 'Lo, the city is barren, I have seen but an eel,' would *that* be Terewth?"

Mrs. Snagsby sobbing loudly.

"Or put it, my juvenile friends," said Chadband, stimulated by the sm "that the unnatural parents of this slumbering Heathen—for parents he had juvenile friends, beyond a doubt—after casting him forth to the wolves and vultures, and the wild dogs and the young gazelles, and the serpents, went bac their dwellings and had their pipes, and their pots, and their flutings and dancings, and their malt liquors, and their butcher's meat and poultry, would be Terewth!"

Mrs. Snagsby replies by delivering herself a prey to spasms; not an unreas prey, but a crying and a tearing one, so that Cook's Court re-echoes with shrieks. Finally, becoming cataleptic, she has to be carried up the narrow case like a grand piano. After unspeakable suffering, productive of the un consternation, she is pronounced, by expresses from the bedroom, free from though much exhausted; in which state of affairs Mr. Snagsby, trampled crushed in the pianoforte removal, and extremely timid and feeble, venture come out from behind the door in the drawing-room.

All this time, Jo has been standing on the spot where he woke up, every ing his cap, and putting bits of fur in his mouth. He spits them out wi remorseful air, for he feels that it is in his nature to be an unimprovable repro and that it's no good *his* trying to keep awake, for *he* won't never know noth Though it may be, Jo, that there is a history so interesting and affecting eve minds as near the brutes as thine, recording deeds done on this earth for com men, that if the Chadbands, removing their own persons from the light, w but show it thee in simple reverence, would but leave it unimproved, would regard it as being eloquent enough without their modest aid—it might hold awake, and thou might learn from it yet!

Jo never heard of any such book. Its compilers, and the Reverend Chadb are all one to him—except that he knows the Reverend Chadband, and w *rather run* away from him for an hour than hear him talk for five minutes.

ɔd my waiting here no longer," thinks Jo. "Mr. Snagsby an't a-going
ıink to me to-night." And down-stairs he shuffles.
n-stairs is the charitable Guster, holding by the handrail of the kitchen
warding off a fit, as yet doubtfully, the same having been induced by
sby's screaming. She has her own supper of bread and cheese to hand
h whom she ventures to interchange a word or so, for the first time.
something to eat, poor boy," says Guster.
'ee, mum," says Jo.
ɔu hungry?"
says Jo.
s gone of your father and your mother, eh?"
in the middle of a bite, and looks petrified. For this orphan charge of
ın saint whose shrine was at Tooting, has patted him on the shoulder;
e first time in his life that any decent hand has been so laid upon him.
r know'd nothink about 'em," says Jo.
ɔre didn't I of mine," cries Guster. She is repressing symptoms favour-
fit, when she seems to take alarm at something, and vanishes down the

'hispers the law-stationer softly, as the boy lingers on the step.
: am, Mr. Snagsby!"
't know you were gone—there's another half-crown, Jo. It was quite
ɔu to say nothing about the lady the other night when we were out
It would breed trouble. You can't be too quiet, Jo."
ly, master!"
good night.
ly shade, frilled and night-capped, follows the law-stationer to the room
rom, and glides higher up. And henceforth he begins, go where he
attended by another shadow than his own, hardly less constant than his
ly less quiet than his own. And into whatsoever atmosphere of secrecy
hadow may pass, let all concerned in the secrecy beware! For the
Irs. Snagsby is there too—bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh, shadow
low.

CHAPTER XXVI.

SHARPSHOOTERS.

norning, looking with dull eyes and sallow face upon the neighbourhood
er Square, finds its inhabitants unwilling to get out of bed. Many of
ıot early risers at the brightest of times, being birds of night who roost
ıun is high, and are wide awake and keen for prey when the stars shine
ind dingy blind and curtain, in upper story and garret, skulking more or
false names, false hair, false titles, false jewellery, and false histories, a
ɔrigands lie in their first sleep. Gentlemen of the green baize road who
ɔurse, from personal experience, of foreign galleys and home treadmills;
ɪrong governments that eternally quake with weakness and miserable
ɪn traitors, cowards, bullies, gamesters, shufflers, swindlers, and false
some not unmarked by the branding-iron, beneath their dirty braid; all
cruelty in them than was in Nero, and more crime than is in Newgate.
oever bad the devil can be in fustian or smock-frock (and he can be very

had in both) he is a more designing, callous, and intolerable devil when a pin in his shirt-front, calls himself a gentleman, backs a card or colour game or so of billiards, and knows a little about bills and promissory no in any other form he wears. And in such form Mr. Bucket shall find hi he will, still pervading the tributary channels of Leicester Square.

But the wintry morning wants him not and wakes him not. It wa George of the Shooting Gallery, and his Familiar. They arise, roll up away their mattresses. Mr. George, having shaved himself before a look of minute proportions, then marches out, bare-headed and bare-cheste Pump, in the little yard, and anon comes back shining with yellow soap, drifting rain, and exceedingly cold water. As he rubs himself upon a la towel, blowing like a military sort of diver just come up: his crisp hai tighter and tighter on his sunburnt temples, the more he rubs it, so that it h it never could be loosened by any less coercive instrument than an iron r curry-comb—as he rubs, and puffs, and polishes, and blows, turning his h side to side, the more conveniently to excoriate his throat, and standing body well bent forward, to keep the wet from his martial legs—Phil, on l lighting a fire, looks round as if it were enough washing for him to see done, and sufficient renovation, for one day, to take in the superfluous h master throws off.

When Mr. George is dry, he goes to work to brush his head with t brushes at once, to that unmerciful degree that Phil, shouldering his w the gallery in the act of sweeping it, winks with sympathy. This chan the ornamental part of Mr. George's toilet is soon performed. He fills lights it, and marches up and down smoking, as his custom is, while Phi a powerful odour of hot rolls and coffee, prepares breakfast. He smokes and marches in slow time. Perhaps this morning's pipe is devoted to the of Gridley in his grave.

"And so, Phil," says George of the Shooting Gallery, after several silence; "you were dreaming of the country last night?"

Phil, by-the-bye, said as much, in a tone of surprise, as he scrambled ou

"Yes, guv'ner."

"What was it like?"

"I hardly know what it was like, guv'ner," said Phil, considering.

"How did you know it was the country?"

"On account of the grass, I think. And the swans upon it," says P further consideration.

"What were the swans doing on the grass?"

"They was a-eating of it, I expect," says Phil.

The master resumes his march, and the man resumes his preparation o fast. It is not necessarily a lengthened preparation, being limited to th forth of very simple breakfast requisites for two, and the broiling of a bacon at the fire in the rusty grate; but as Phil has to sidle round a con part of the gallery for every object he wants, and never brings two o once, it takes time under the circumstances. At length the breakfast Phil announcing it, Mr. George knocks the ashes out of his pipe on t stands his pipe itself in the chimney corner, and sits down, to the meal. he has helped himself, Phil follows suit; sitting at the extreme end of oblong table, and taking his plate on his knees. Either in humility, o his blackened hands, or because it is his natural manner of eating.

"The country," says Mr. George, plying his knife and fork; "why, I you never clapped your eyes on the country, Phil?"

"I see the marshes once," says Phil, contentedly eating his breakfast.

"What marshes?"

"*The* marshes, commander," returns Phil.

"Where are they?"

"I don't know where they are," says Phil; "but I see 'em, guv'ner. They was flat. And miste."

Governor and Commander are interchangeable terms with Phil, expressive of the same respect and deference, and applicable to nobody but Mr. George.

"I was born in the country, Phil."

"Was you indeed, commander?"

"Yes. And bred there."

Phil elevates his one eyebrow, and, after respectfully staring at his master to express interest, swallows a great gulp of coffee, still staring at him.

"There's not a bird's note that I don't know," says Mr. George. "Not many an English leaf or berry that I couldn't name. Not many a tree that I couldn't climb yet, if I was put to it. I was a real country boy, once. My good mother lived in the country."

"She must have been a fine old lady, guv'ner," Phil observes.

"Ay! and not so old either, five-and-thirty years ago," says Mr. George. "But I'll wager that at ninety she would be near as upright as me, and near as broad across the shoulders."

"Did she die at ninety, guv'ner?" inquires Phil.

"No. Bosh! Let her rest in peace, God bless her!" says the trooper. "What set me on about country boys, and runaways, and good-for-nothings? You, to be sure! So you never clapped your eyes upon the country—marshes and dreams excepted. Eh?"

Phil shakes his head.

"Do you want to see it?"

"N-no, I don't know as I do, particular," says Phil.

"The town's enough for you, eh?"

"Why you see, commander," says Phil, "I ain't acquainted with anythink else, and I doubt if I ain't a-getting too old to take to novelties."

"How old *are* you, Phil?" asks the trooper, pausing as he conveys his smoking saucer to his lips.

"I'm something with a eight in it," says Phil. "It can't be eighty. Nor yet eighteen. It's betwixt 'em, somewheres."

Mr. George, slowly putting down his saucer without tasting its contents, is laughingly beginning, "Why, what the deuce, Phil,"—when he stops, seeing that Phil is counting on his dirty fingers.

"I was just eight," says Phil, "agreeable to the parish calculation, when I went with the tinker. I was sent on a errand, and I see him a sittin under a old buildin with a fire all to himself wery comfortable, and he says, 'Would you like to come along a me, my man?' I says 'Yes,' and him and me and the fire goes home to Clerkenwell together. That was April Fool Day. I was able to count up to ten; and when April Fool Day come round again, I says to myself, 'Now, old chap, you're one and a eight in it.' April Fool Day after that, I says, 'Now, old chap, you're two and a eight in it.' In course of time, I come to ten and a eight in it; two tens and a eight in it. When it got so high, it got the upper hand of me; but this is how I always know there's a eight in it."

"Ah!" says Mr. George, resuming his breakfast. "And where's the tinker?"

"Drink put him in the hospital, guv'ner, and the hospital put him—in a glass case, I *have* heerd," Phil replies mysteriously.

"By that means you got promotion? Took the business, Phil?"

"Yes, commander, I took the business. Such as it was. It wasn't much of a

beat—round Saffron Hill, Hatton Garden, Clerkenwell, Smithfield, and ther poor neighbourhood, where they uses up the kettles till they're past mendi Most of the tramping tinkers used to come and lodge at our place; that was best part of my master's earnings. But they didn't come to me. I wasn't l him. He could sing 'em a good song. *I* couldn't! He could play 'em a t on any sort of pot you please, so as it was iron or block tin. *I* never could nothing with a pot, but mend it or bile it—never had a note of music in t Besides, I was too ill-looking, and their wives complained of me."

"They were mighty particular. You would pass muster in a crowd, Phi says the trooper with a pleasant smile.

"No, guv'ner," returns Phil, shaking his head. "No, I shouldn't. I passable enough when I went with the tinker, though nothing to boast of th but what with blowing the fire with my mouth when I was young, and spile my complexion, and singeing my hair off, and swallering the smoke; and w with being nat'rally unfort'nate in the way of running against hot metal, marking myself by sich means; and what with having turn-ups with the tinke I got older, almost whenever he was too far gone in drink—which was als always—my beauty was queer, wery queer, even at that time. As to since; w with a dozen years in a dark forge, where the men was given to larking; what with being scorched in a accident at a gas-works; and what with h blowed out of winder, case-filling at the firework business; I am ugly enoug be made a show on!"

Resigning himself to which condition with a perfectly satisfied manner, P begs the favour of another cup of coffee. While drinking it, he says:

"It was after the case-filling blow-up, when I first see you, commander. remember?"

"I remember, Phil. You were walking along in the sun."

"Crawling, guv'ner, again a wall——"

"True, Phil—shouldering your way on——"

"In a nightcap!" exclaims Phil, excited.

"In a nightcap——"

"And hobbling with a couple of sticks!" cries Phil, still more excited.

"With a couple of sticks. When——"

"When you stops, you know," cries Phil, putting down his cup and sau and hastily removing his plate from his knees, "and says to me, 'What, comm You have been in the wars!' I didn't say much to you, commander, then, for I took by surprise, that a person so strong and healthy and bold as you was, sh stop to speak to such a limping bag of bones as I was. But you says to me, you, delivering it out of your chest as hearty as possible, so that it was like a p of something hot, 'What accident have you met with? You have been b hurt. What's amiss, old boy? Cheer up, and tell us about it!' Cheer up was cheered already! I says as much to you, you says more to me, I says m to you, you says more to me, and here I am, commander! Here I am, c mander!" cries Phil, who has started from his chair and unaccountably begu sidle away. "If a mark's wanted, or if it will improve the business, let the tomers take aim at me. They can't spoil *my* beauty. *I*'m all right. Come If they want a man to box at, let 'em box at me. Let 'em knock me well a the head. *I* don't mind! If they want a light-weight, to be throwed for prac Cornwall, Devonshire, or Lancashire, let 'em throw me. They won't hurt I have been throwed, all sorts of styles, all my life!"

With this unexpected speech, energetically delivered, and accompanied action illustrative of the various exercises referred to, Phil Squod shoulders way round three sides of the gallery, and abruptly tacking off at his comman

makes a butt at him with his head, intended to express devotion to his service. He then begins to clear away the breakfast.

Mr. George, after laughing cheerfully, and clapping him on the shoulder, assists in these arrangements, and helps to get the gallery into business order. That done, he takes a turn at the dumb-bells; and afterwards weighing himself, and opining that he is getting "too fleshy," engages with great gravity in solitary broadsword practice. Meanwhile, Phil has fallen to work at his usual table, where he screws and unscrews, and cleans, and files, and whistles into small apertures, and blackens himself more and more, and seems to do and undo everything that can be done and undone about a gun.

Master and man are at length disturbed by footsteps in the passage, where they make an unusual sound, denoting the arrival of unusual company. These steps, advancing nearer and nearer to the gallery, bring into it a group, at first sight scarcely reconcilable with any day in the year but the fifth of November.

It consists of a limp and ugly figure carried in a chair by two bearers, and attended by a lean female with a face like a pinched mask, who might be expected immediately to recite the popular verses, commemorative of the time when they did contrive to blow Old England up alive, but for her keeping her lips tightly and defiantly closed as the chair is put down. At which point, the figure in it gasping, "O Lord! O dear me! I am shaken!" adds, "How de do, my dear friend, how de do?" Mr. George then descries, in the procession, the venerable Mr. Smallweed out for an airing, attended by his grand-daughter Judy as body-guard.

"Mr. George, my dear friend," says Grandfather Smallweed, removing his right arm from the neck of one of his bearers, whom he has nearly throttled coming along, "how de do? You're surprised to see me, my dear friend."

"I should hardly have been more surprised to have seen your friend in the city," returns Mr. George.

"I am very seldom out," pants Mr. Smallweed. "I haven't been out for many months. It's inconvenient—and it comes expensive. But I longed so much to see you, my dear Mr. George. How de do, sir?"

"I am well enough," says Mr. George. "I hope you are the same."

"You can't be too well, my dear friend." Mr. Smallweed takes him by both hands. "I have brought my grand-daughter Judy. I couldn't keep her away. She longed so much to see you."

"Hum! She bears it calmly!" mutters Mr. George.

"So we got a hackney-cab, and put a chair in it, and just round the corner they lifted me out of the cab and into the chair, and carried me here, that I might see my dear friend in his own establishment! This," says Grandfather Smallweed, alluding to the bearer, who has been in danger of strangulation, and who withdraws adjusting his windpipe, "is the driver of the cab. He has nothing extra. It is by agreement included in his fare. This person," the other bearer, "we engaged in the street outside for a pint of beer. Which is twopence. Judy, give the person twopence. I was not sure you had a workman of your own here, my dear friend, or we needn't have employed this person."

Grandfather Smallweed refers to Phil, with a glance of considerable terror, and a half-subdued "O Lord! O dear me!" Nor is his apprehension, on the surface of things, without some reason; for Phil, who has never beheld the apparition in the black velvet cap before, has stopped short with a gun in his hand, with much of the air of a dead shot, intent on picking Mr. Smallweed off as an ugly old bird of the crow species.

"Judy, my child," says Grandfather Smallweed, "give the person his twopence. It's a great deal for what he has done."

The person, who is one of those extraordinary specimens of human fungus [illegible]

spring up spontaneously in the western streets of London, ready dressed in an
red jacket, with a "Mission" for holding horses and calling coaches, receives
twopence with anything but transport, tosses the money into the air, catches
over-handed, and retires.

"My dear Mr. George," says Grandfather Smallweed, "would you be so k
as help to carry me to the fire? I am accustomed to a fire, and I am an old m
and I soon chill. O dear me!"

His closing exclamation is jerked out of the venerable gentleman by the s
denness with which Mr. Squod, like a genie, catches him up, chair and all,
deposits him on the hearth-stone.

"O Lord!" says Mr. Smallweed, panting. "O dear me! O my stars!
dear friend, your workman is very strong—and very prompt. O Lord,
is very prompt! Judy, draw me back a little. I'm being scorched in the leg
which indeed is testified to the noses of all present by the smell of his woo
stockings.

The gentle Judy, having backed her grandfather a little way from the fire,
having shaken him up as usual, and having released his overshadowed eye fr
its black velvet extinguisher, Mr. Smallweed again says, "O dear me! O Lord
and looking about, and meeting Mr. George's glance, again stretches out h
hands.

"My dear friend! So happy in this meeting! And this is your establishme
It's a delightful place. It's a picture! You never find that anything goes
here, accidentally; do you, my dear friend?" adds Grandfather Smallweed, v
ill at ease.

"No, no. No fear of that."

"And your workman. He—O dear me!—he never lets anything off with
meaning it; does he, my dear friend?"

"He has never hurt anybody but himself," says Mr. George, smiling.

"But he might, you know. He seems to have hurt himself a good deal,
he might hurt somebody else," the old gentleman returns. "He mightn't m
it—or he even might. Mr. George, will you order him to leave his infernal
arms alone, and go away?"

Obedient to a nod from the trooper, Phil retires, empty-handed, to the o
end of the gallery. Mr. Smallweed, reassured, falls to rubbing his legs.

"And you're doing well, Mr. George?" he says to the trooper, squarely sta
ing faced about towards him with his broadsword in his hand. "You
prospering, please the Powers?"

Mr. George answers with a cool nod, adding, "Go on. You have not com
say that, I know."

"You are so sprightly, Mr. George," returns the venerable grandfather. "
are such good company."

"Ha ha! Go on!" says Mr. George.

"My dear friend!—But that sword looks awful gleaming and sharp. It m
cut somebody, by accident. It makes me shiver, Mr. George—Curse him!"
the excellent old gentleman apart to Judy, as the trooper takes a step or
away to lay it aside. "He owes me money, and might think of paying off
scores in this murdering place. I wish your brimstone grandmother was h
and he'd shave her head off."

Mr. George, returning, folds his arms, and looking down at the old m
sliding every moment lower and lower in his chair, says quietly, "Now for it!"

"Ho!" cries Mr. Smallweed, rubbing his hands with an artful chuckle. "
Now for it. Now for what, my dear friend?"

"For a pipe," says Mr. George; who with great composure sets his chair in

[redacted]

chimney-corner, takes his pipe from the grate, fills it and lights it, and falls to smoking peacefully.

This tends to the discomfiture of Mr. Smallweed, who finds it so difficult to resume his object, whatever it may be, that he becomes exasperated, and secretly claws the air with an impotent vindictiveness expressive of an intense desire to tear and rend the visage of Mr. George. As the excellent old gentleman's nails are long and leaden, and his hands lean and veinous, and his eyes green and watery; and, over and above this, as he continues, while he claws, to slide down in his chair and to collapse into a shapeless bundle; he becomes such a ghastly spectacle, even in the accustomed eyes of Judy, that that young virgin pounces at him with something more than the ardour of affection, and so shakes him up, and pats and pokes him in divers parts of his body, but particularly in that part which the science of self-defence would call his wind, that in his grievous distress he utters enforced sounds like a paviour's rammer.

When Judy has by these means set him up again in his chair, with a white face and a frosty nose (but still clawing), she stretches out her weazen forefinger, and gives Mr. George one poke in the back. The trooper raising his head, she makes another poke at her esteemed grandfather; and, having thus brought them together, stares rigidly at the fire.

"Aye, aye! Ho, ho! U-u-u—ugh!" chatters Grandfather Smallweed, swallowing his rage. "My dear friend!" (still clawing).

"I tell you what," says Mr. George. "If you want to converse with me, you must speak out. I am one of the Roughs, and I can't go about and about. I haven't the art to do it. I am not clever enough. It don't suit me. When you go winding round and round me," says the trooper, putting his pipe between his lips again, "damme, if I don't feel as if I was being smothered!"

And he inflates his broad chest to its utmost extent, as if to assure himself that he is not smothered yet.

"If you have come to give me a friendly call," continues Mr. George, "I am obliged to you; how are you? If you have come to see whether there's any property on the premises, look about you; you are welcome. If you want to out with something, out with it!"

The blooming Judy, without removing her gaze from the fire, gives her grandfather one ghostly poke.

"You see! It's her opinion, too. And why the devil that young woman won't sit down like a Christian," says Mr. George, with his eyes musingly fixed on Judy, "*I* can't comprehend."

"She keeps at my side to attend to me, sir," says Grandfather Smallweed. "I am an old man, my dear Mr. George, and I need some attention. I can carry my years; I am not a Brimstone poll-parrot" (snarling and looking unconsciously for the cushion), "but I need attention, my dear friend."

"Well!" returns the trooper, wheeling his chair to face the old man. "Now then?"

"My friend in the city, Mr. George, has done a little business with a pupil of yours."

"Has he?" says Mr. George. "I am sorry to hear it."

"Yes, sir." Grandfather Smallweed rubs his legs. "He is a fine young soldier now, Mr. George, by the name of Carstone. Friends came forward, and paid it all up, honourable."

"Did they?" returns Mr. George. "Do you think your friend in the city would like a piece of advice?"

"I think he would, my dear friend. From you."

"I advise him, then, to do no more business in that quarter. There's no more

to be got by it. The young gentleman, to my knowledge, is brought to a de halt."

"No, no, my dear friend. No, no, Mr. George. No, no, no, sir," remonstrat Grandfather Smallweed, cunningly rubbing his spare legs. "Not quite a de halt, I think. He has good friends, and he is good for his pay, and he is good f the selling price of his commission, and he is good for his chance in a lawsuit, a he is good for his chance in a wife, and—oh, do you know, Mr. George, I thi my friend would consider the young gentleman good for something yet?" a Grandfather Smallweed, turning up his velvet cap, and scratching his ear like monkey.

Mr. George, who has put aside his pi[illegible]nd sits with an arm on his chair-ba beats a tattoo on the ground with his r[illegible] foot, as if he were not particula pleased with the turn the conversation h[illegible]aken.

"But to pass from one subject to ano[illegible]er," resumes Mr. Smallweed. "I promote the conversation, as a joker might say. To pass, Mr. George, from t ensign to the captain."

"What are you up to, now?" asks Mr. George, pausing with a frown in stroki the recollection of his moustache. "What captain?"

"Our captain. The captain we know of. Captain Hawdon."

"O! that's it, is it?" says Mr. George, with a low whistle, as he sees h grandfather and grand-daughter looking hard at him; "you are there! W what about it? Come, I won't be smothered any more. Speak!"

"My dear friend," returns the old man, "I was applied—Judy, shake me u little!—I was applied to, yesterday, about the captain; and my opinion still that the captain is not dead."

"Bosh!" observes Mr. George.

"What was your remark, my dear friend?" inquires the old man with his h to his ear.

"Bosh!"

"Ho!" says Grandfather Smallweed. "Mr. George, of my opinion you judge for yourself, according to the questions asked of me, and the reasons gi for asking 'em. Now, what do you think the lawyer making the inqui wants?"

"A job," says Mr. George.

"Nothing of the kind!"

"Can't be a lawyer, then," says Mr. George, folding his arms with an air confirmed resolution.

"My dear friend, he is a lawyer, and a famous one. He wants to see so fragment in Captain Hawdon's writing. He don't want to keep it. He o wants to see it, and compare it with a writing in his possession."

"Well?"

"Well, Mr. George. Happening to remember the advertisement concern Captain Hawdon, and any information that could be given respecting him, looked it up and came to me—just as you did, my dear friend. *Will* you sh hands? So glad you came, that day! I should have missed forming suc friendship, if you hadn't come!"

"Well, Mr. Smallweed?" says Mr. George again, after going through ceremony with some stiffness.

"I had no such thing. I have nothing but his signature. Plague pestile and famine, battle murder and sudden death upon him," says the old man, mak a curse out of one of his few remembrances of a prayer, and squeezing up velvet cap between his angry hands, "I have half a million of his signatures *think! But you,*" breathlessly recovering his mildness of speech, as Judy

the cap on his skittle-ball of a head; "you, my dear Mr. George, are
› have some letter or paper that would suit the purpose. Anything would
purpose, written in the hand."
me writing in that hand," says the trooper, pondering, "may be, I have."
· dearest friend!"
ıy be, I have not."
!" says Grandfather Smallweed, crest-fallen.
t if I had bushels of it, I would not show as much as would make a
ɐe, without knowing why."
. I have told you why. My dear Mr. George, I have told you why."
t enough," says the trooper, shaking his head. "I must know more, and
: it."
en, will you come to the lawyer? My dear friend, will you come and see
ıtleman?" urges Grandfather Smallweed, pulling out a lean old silver
with hands like the leg of a skeleton. "I told him it was probable I
call upon him, between ten and eleven this forenoon; and it's now half
n. Will you come and see the gentleman, Mr. George?"
ım!" says he, gravely. "I don't mind that. Though why this should
ı you so much, I don't know."
erything concerns me, that has a chance in it of bringing anything to light
him. Didn't he take us all in? Didn't he owe us immense sums, all
Concern me? Who can anything about him concern, more than me?
ıy dear friend," says Grandfather Smallweed, lowering his tone, "that I
ou to betray anything. Far from it. Are you ready to come, my dear
"
·! I'll come in a moment. I promise nothing, you know."
, my dear Mr. George; no."
d you mean to say you're going to give me a lift to this place, wherever it
out charging for it?" Mr. George inquires, getting his hat, and thick
ather gloves.
pleasantry so tickles Mr. Smallweed, that he laughs, long and low, before
. But ever while he laughs, he glances over his paralytic shoulder at Mr.
, and eagerly watches him as he unlocks the padlock of a homely cupboard
listant end of the gallery, looks here and there upon the higher shelves, and
ely takes something out with a rustling of paper, folds it, and puts it in his
Then Judy pokes Mr. Smallweed once, and Mr. Smallweed pokes Judy

ım ready," says the trooper, coming back. "Phil, you can carry this old
ıan to his coach, and make nothing of him."
dear me! O Lord! Stop a moment!" says Mr. Smallweed. "He's so
ompt! Are you sure you can do it carefully, my worthy man?"
makes no reply; but, seizing the chair and its load, sidles away, tightly
by the now speechless Mr. Smallweed, and bolts along the passage, as if
an acceptable commission to carry the old gentleman to the nearest volcano.
ırter trust, however, terminating at the cab, he deposits him there; and the
ly takes her place beside him, and the chair embellishes the roof, and Mr.
takes the vacant place upon the box.
George is quite confounded by the spectacle he beholds from time to time
eeps into the cab, through the window behind him; where the grim Judy
ys motionless, and the old gentleman with his cap over one eye is always
off the seat into the straw, and looking upward at him, out of his other
th a helpless expression of being jolted in the back.

CHAPTER XXVII.

MORE OLD SOLDIERS THAN ONE.

MR. GEORGE has not far to ride with folded arms upon the box, for their destination is Lincoln's Inn Fields. When the driver stops his horses, Mr. George alights, and looking in at the window, says:

"What, Mr. Tulkinghorn 's your man, is he?"

"Yes, my dear friend. Do you know him, Mr. George?"

"Why, I have heard of him—seen him too, I think. But I don't know him, and he don't know me."

There ensues the carrying of Mr. Smallweed up-stairs; which is done to perfection with the trooper's help. He is borne into Mr. Tulkinghorn's great room, and deposited on the Turkey rug before the fire. Mr. Tulkinghorn is not within at the present moment, but will be back directly. The occupant of the pew in the hall having said thus much, stirs the fire, and leaves the triumvirate to warm themselves.

Mr. George is mightily curious in respect of the room. He looks up at the painted ceiling, looks round at the old law-books, contemplates the portraits of the great clients, reads aloud the names on the boxes.

"'Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet,'" Mr. George reads thoughtfully. "'Manor of Chesney Wold.' Humph!" Mr. George stands looking at the boxes a long while—as if they were pictures—and comes back to the fire repeating "Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet, and Manor of Chesney Wold, hey?"

"Worth a mint of money, Mr. George!" whispers Grandfather Smallweed, rubbing his legs. "Powerfully rich!"

"Who do you mean? This old gentleman, or the Baronet?"

"This gentleman, this gentleman."

"So I have heard; and knows a thing or two, I'll hold a wager. Not to [illegible] quarters, either," says Mr. George, looking round again. "See the strong box yonder!"

This reply is cut short by Mr. Tulkinghorn's arrival. There is no change in him, of course. Rustily drest, with his spectacles in his hand, and their very case worn threadbare. In manner, close and dry. In voice, husky and low. In face, watchful behind a blind; habitually not uncensorious and contemptuous perhaps. The peerage may have warmer worshippers and faithfuller believers than Mr. Tulkinghorn, after all, if everything were known.

"Good morning, Mr. Smallweed, good morning!" he says as he comes in. "You have brought the serjeant, I see. Sit down, serjeant."

As Mr. Tulkinghorn takes off his gloves and puts them in his hat, he looks with half-closed eyes across the room to where the trooper stands, and says within himself perchance, "You'll do, my friend!"

"Sit down, serjeant," he repeats, as he comes to his table, which is set on one side of the fire, and takes his easy-chair. "Cold and raw this morning, cold and raw!" Mr. Tulkinghorn warms before the bars, alternately, the palms and knuckles of his hands, and looks (from behind that blind which is always down) at the trio sitting in a little semicircle before him.

"Now, I can feel what I am about!" (as perhaps he can in two senses) "Mr. Smallweed." The old gentleman is newly shaken up by Judy, to bear his part in the conversation. "You have brought our good friend the serjeant, I see."

"Yes, sir," returns Mr. Smallweed, very servile to the lawyer's wealth and influence.

l what does the serjeant say about this business?"
George," says Grandfather Smallweed, with a tremulous wave of his
d hand, "this is the gentleman, sir."
eorge salutes the gentleman; but otherwise sits bolt upright and pro-
silent—very forward in his chair, as if the full complement of regulation
ges for a field-day hung about him.
ulkinghorn proceeds: "Well, George?—I believe your name is George?"
so, sir."
at do you say, George?"
k your pardon, sir," returns the trooper, "but I should wish to know
u say?"
you mean in point of reward?"
ean in point of everything, sir."
s so very trying to Mr. Smallweed's temper, that he suddenly breaks out
'ou're a Brimstone beast!" and as suddenly asks pardon of Mr. Tulking-
xcusing himself for this slip of the tongue, by saying to Judy, "I was
of your grandmother, my dear."
pposed, serjeant," Mr. Tulkinghorn resumes, as he leans on one side of
and crosses his legs, "that Mr. Smallweed might have sufficiently ex-
the matter. It lies in the smallest compass, however. You served under
Hawdon at one time, and were his attendant in illness, and rendered him
tle services, and were rather in his confidence, I am told. That is so, is
?

, sir, that is so," says Mr. George, with military brevity.
refore you may happen to have in your possession something—anything,
er what—accounts, instructions, orders, a letter, anything—in Captain
's writing. I wish to compare his writing with some that I have. If you
me the opportunity, you shall be rewarded for your trouble. Three, four,
neas, you would consider handsome, I dare say."
ole, my dear friend!" cries Grandfather Smallweed, screwing up his eyes.
ot, say how much more, in your conscience as a soldier, you can demand.
s no need for you to part with the writing, against your inclination—
I should prefer to have it."
eorge sits squared in exactly the same attitude, looks at the painted ceiling,
never a word. The irascible Mr. Smallweed scratches the air.
question is," says Mr. Tulkinghorn in his methodical, subdued, unin-
way, "first, whether you have any of Captain Hawdon's writing?"
t, whether I have any of Captain Hawdon's writing, sir," repeats Mr.

ondly, what will satisfy you for the trouble of producing it?"
ondly, what will satisfy me for the trouble of producing it, sir," repeats
orge.
rdly, you can judge for yourself whether it is at all like that," says Mr.
horn, suddenly handing him some sheets of written paper tied together.
ether it is at all like that, sir. Just so," repeats Mr. George.
aree repetitions Mr. George pronounces in a mechanical manner, looking
at Mr. Tulkinghorn; nor does he so much as glance at the affidavit in
e and Jarndyce, that has been given to him for his inspection (though he
ls it in his hand), but continues to look at the lawyer with an air of troubled
on.
ll?" says Mr. Tulkinghorn. "What do you say?"
ll, sir," replies Mr. George, rising erect and looking immense, "I would
f you'll excuse me, have nothing to do with this."

Mr. Tulkinghorn, outwardly quite undisturbed, demands "Why not?"

"Why, sir," returns the trooper. "Except on military compulsion, I a a man of business. Among civilians I am what they call in Scotland a ne weel. I have no head for papers, sir. I can stand any fire better than a cross questions. I mentioned to Mr. Smallweed, only an hour or so ag when I come into things of this kind I feel as if I was being smothered. that is my sensation," says Mr. George, looking round upon the company, " present moment."

With that, he takes three strides forward to replace the papers on the la table, and three strides backward to resume his former station: where he perfectly upright, now looking at the ground, and now at the painted ceilin his hands behind him as if to prevent himself from accepting any other de whatever.

Under this provocation, Mr. Smallweed's favourite adjective of disparagem so close to his tongue, that he begins the words "my dear friend" with the syllable "Brim;" thus converting the possessive pronoun into Brimmy, a pearing to have an impediment in his speech. Once past this difficulty, ho he exhorts his dear friend in the tenderest manner not to be rash, but to d so eminent a gentleman requires, and to do it with a good grace: confide it must be unobjectionable as well as profitable. Mr. Tulkinghorn merely st occasional sentence, as "You are the best judge of your own interest, ser "Take care you do no harm by this." "Please yourself, please yourself. you know what you mean, that's quite enough." These he utters with an a ance of perfect indifference, as he looks over the papers on his table, and p to write a letter.

Mr. George looks distrustfully from the painted ceiling to the ground, fr ground to Mr. Smallweed, from Mr. Smallweed to Mr. Tulkinghorn, an Mr. Tulkinghorn to the painted ceiling again; often in his perplexity ch the leg on which he rests.

"I do assure you, sir," says Mr. George, "not to say it offensively, t tween you and Mr. Smallweed here, I really am being smothered fifty time I really am, sir. I am not a match for you gentlemen. Will you allow ask, why you want to see the captain's hand, in the case that I could fi specimen of it?"

Mr. Tulkinghorn quietly shakes his head. "No. If you were a man o ness, serjeant, you would not need to be informed, that there are confi reasons, very harmless in themselves, for many such wants, in the profes which I belong. But if you are afraid of doing any injury to Captain Hu you may set your mind at rest about that."

"Ay! he is dead, sir."

"*Is* he?" Mr. Tulkinghorn quietly sits down to write.

"Well, sir," says the trooper, looking into his hat after another discre pause; "I am sorry not to have given you more satisfaction. If it would satisfaction to any one, that I should be confirmed in my judgment that I rather have nothing to do with this, by a friend of mine, who has a bette for business than I have, and who is an old soldier, I am willing to consul him. I—I really am so completely smothered myself at present," say George, passing his hand hopelessly across his brow, "that I don't kn what it might be a satisfaction to me."

Mr. Smallweed, hearing that this authority is an old soldier, so strongly cates the expediency of the trooper's taking counsel with him, and parti informing him of its being a question of five guineas or more, that Mr. engages to go and see him. Mr. Tulkinghorn says nothing either way.

ılt my friend, then, by your leave, sir," says the trooper, "and I'll
ty of looking in again with the final answer in the course of the day.
ed, if you wish to be carried down-stairs——"
nent, my dear friend, in a moment. Will you first let me speak half
this gentleman, in private?"
, sir. Don't hurry yourself on my account." The trooper retires to
of the room, and resumes his curious inspection of the boxes; strong
e.
i't as weak as a Brimstone Baby, sir," whispers Grandfather Small-
g the lawyer down to his level by the lappel of his coat, and flashing
enched green fire out of his angry eyes, "I'd tear the writing away
He's got it buttoned in his breast. I saw him put it there. Judy saw
re. Speak up, you crabbed image for the sign of a walking-stick
you saw him put it there!"
ient conjuration the old gentleman accompanies with such a thrust at
ighter, that it is too much for his strength, and he slips away out of
wing Mr. Tulkinghorn with him, until he is arrested by Judy, and

will not do for me, my friend," Mr. Tulkinghorn then remarks coolly.
I know, I know, sir. But it's chafing and galling—it's—it's worse
attering chattering Magpie of a grandmother," to the imperturbable
ily looks at the fire, "to know he has got what's wanted, and won't
He, not to give it up! *He!* A vagabond! But never mind, sir,
At the most, he has only his own way for a little while. I have
ally in a vice. I'll twist him, sir. I'll screw him, sir. If he
ith a good grace, I'll make him do it with a bad one, sir!—Now,
. George," says Grandfather Smallweed, winking at the lawyer
he releases him, "I am ready for your kind assistance, my excellent

nghorn, with some shadowy sign of amusement manifesting itself
self-possession, stands on the hearth-rug with his back to the fire,
disappearance of Mr. Smallweed, and acknowledging the trooper's
with one slight nod.
difficult to get rid of the old gentleman, Mr. George finds, than to
n carrying him down-stairs; for, when he is replaced in his convey-
loquacious on the subject of the guineas, and retains such an affec-
of his button—having, in truth, a secret longing to rip his coat open,
—that some degree of force is necessary on the trooper's part to effect
It is accomplished at last, and he proceeds alone in quest of his

isterly Temple, and by Whitefriars (there, not without a glance at
ord Alley, which would seem to be something in his way), and by
ridge, and Blackfriars Road, Mr. George sedately marches to a street
lying somewhere in that ganglion of roads from Kent and Surrey,
s from the bridges of London, centreing in the far-famed Elephant
his castle formed of a thousand four-horse coaches, to a stronger iron
he, ready to chop him into mince-meat any day he dares. To one
hops in this street, which is a musician's shop, having a few fiddles
s, and some Pan's pipes and a tambourine, and a triangle, and certain
aps of music, Mr. George directs his massive tread. And halting at
rom it, as he sees a soldierly-looking woman, with her outer skirts
ome forth with a small wooden tub, and in that tub commence a
a splashing on the *margin* of the pavement, Mr. George says to

himself, "She's as usual, washing greens. I never saw her, except upon a gage-waggon, when she wasn't washing greens!"

The subject of this reflection is at all events so occupied in washing gree present, that she remains unsuspicious of Mr. George's approach; until, lifti herself and her tub together, when she has poured the water off into the g she finds him standing near her. Her reception of him is not flattering.

"George, I never see you but I wish you was a hundred mile away!"

The trooper, without remarking on this welcome, follows into the music strument shop, where the lady places her tub of greens upon the counter, having shaken hands with him, rests her arms upon it.

"I never," she says, "George, consider Matthew Bagnet safe a minute you're near him. You are that restless and that roving——"

"Yes! I know I am, Mrs. Bagnet. I know I am."

"You know you are!" says Mrs. Bagnet. "What's the use of that? are you?"

"The nature of the animal, I suppose," returns the trooper good-humoure

"Ah!" cries Mrs. Bagnet, something shrilly, "but what satisfaction wi nature of the animal be to me, when the animal shall have tempted my Mat from the musical business to New Zealand or Australey?"

Mrs. Bagnet is not at all an ill-looking woman. Rather large-boned, a coarse in the grain, and freckled by the sun and wind which have tanned her upon the forehead; but healthy, wholesome, and bright-eyed. A strong, active, honest-faced woman of from forty-five to fifty. Clean, hardy, and so ec mically dressed (though substantially), that the only article of ornament of whic stands possessed appears to be her wedding-ring; around which her finger grown to be so large since it was put on, that it will never come off again it shall mingle with Mrs. Bagnet's dust.

"Mrs. Bagnet," says the trooper, "I am on my parole with you. Mat will g harm from me. You may trust me so far."

"Well, I think I may. But the very looks of you are unsettling," Mrs. Ba rejoins. "Ah, George, George! If you had only settled down, and married Pouch's widow when he died in North America, *she'd* have combed your hai you."

"It was a chance for me, certainly," returns the trooper, half-laughingly, seriously, "but I shall never settle down into a respectable man now. Joe Pou widow might have done me good—there was something in her—and somethi her—but I couldn't make up my mind to it. If I had had the luck to meet such a wife as Mat found!"

Mrs. Bagnet, who seems in a virtuous way to be under little reserve with a sort of fellow, but to be another good sort of fellow herself for that matter, rec this compliment by flicking Mr. George in the face with a head of greens, taking her tub into the little room behind the shop.

"Why, Quebec, my poppet," says George, following, on invitation, into department. "And little Malta, too! Come and kiss your Bluffy!"

These young ladies—not supposed to have been actually christened by the n applied to them, though always so called in the family, from the places of birth in barracks—are respectively employed on three-legged stools: the you (some five or six years old), in learning her letters out of a penny primer; elder (eight or nine perhaps), in teaching her, and sewing with great assid Both hail Mr. George with acclamations as an old friend, and after some ki and romping plant their stools beside him.

"And how's young Woolwich?" says Mr. George.

"Ah! There now!" cries Mrs. Bagnet, turning about from her sauce

ing dinner), with a bright flush on her face. "Would you believe
ngagement at the Theayter, with his father, to play the fife in a
'

, my godson!" cries Mr. George, slapping his thigh.
ou!" says Mrs. Bagnet. "He's a Briton. That's what Woolwich
"

lows away at his bassoon, and you're respectable civilians one and
George. "Family people. Children growing up. Mat's old
land, and your old father somewhere else, corresponded with;
ttle; and—well, well! To be sure, I don't know why I shouldn't
ndred mile away, for I have not much to do with all this!"
is becoming thoughtful; sitting before the fire in the whitewashed
is a sanded floor, and a barrack smell, and contains nothing super-
not a visible speck of dirt or dust in it, from the faces of Quebec
the bright tin pots and pannikins upon the dresser shelves;—Mr.
ming thoughtful, sitting here while Mrs. Bagnet is busy, when Mr.
ung Woolwich opportunely come home. Mr. Bagnet is an ex-
ll and upright, with shaggy eyebrows, and whiskers like the fibres
not a hair upon his head, and a torrid complexion. His voice,
d resonant, is not at all unlike the tones of the instrument to which
Indeed there may be generally observed in him an unbending,
ass-bound air, as if he were himself the bassoon of the human
ung Woolwich is the type and model of a young drummer.
and son salute the trooper heartily. He saying, in due season,
me to advise with Mr. Bagnet, Mr. Bagnet hospitably declares
ear of no business until after dinner; and that his friend shall
his counsel, without first partaking of boiled pork and greens.
ielding to this invitation, he and Mr. Bagnet, not to embarrass
reparations, go forth to take a turn up and down the little street,
omenade with measured tread and folded arms, as if it were a

ays Mr. Bagnet. "You know me. It's my old girl that advises.
ad. But I never own to it before her. Discipline must be main-
till the greens is off her mind. Then, we'll consult. Whatever
s, do—do it!"
, Mat," replies the other. "I would sooner take her opinion
college."
returns Mr. Bagnet, in short sentences, bassoon-like. "What col-
leave—in another quarter of the world—with nothing but a grey
mbrella—to make its way home to Europe? The old girl would
. Did it once!"
ght," says Mr. George.
ge," pursues Bagnet, "could you set up in life—with two penn'orth
-a penn'orth of fuller's earth—a ha'porth of sand—and the rest of
t of sixpence, in money? That's what the old girl started on. In
siness."
ced to hear it's thriving, Mat."
irl," says Mr. Bagnet, acquiescing, "saves. Has a stocking some-
money it. I never saw it. But I know she's got it. Wait till the
ter mind. Then she'll set you up."
easure!" exclaims Mr. George.
e. But I never own to it before her. Discipline must be main-
s the old girl that brought out my musical abilities. I should have

been in the artillery now, but for the old girl. Six years I hammered Ten at the flute. The old girl said it wouldn't do; intention good flexibility; try the bassoon. The old girl borrowed a bassoon fr master of the Rifle Regiment. I practised in the trenches. Got on get a living by it!"

George remarks that she looks as fresh as a rose, and as sound as

"The old girl," says Mr. Bagnet in reply, "is a thoroughly fine sequently, she is like a thoroughly fine day. Gets finer as she get saw the old girl's equal. But I never own to it before her. Disc maintained!"

Proceeding to converse on indifferent matters, they walk up and d street, keeping step and time, until summoned by Quebec and Malt to the pork and greens; over which Mrs. Bagnet, like a military a short grace. In the distribution of these comestibles, as in every hold duty, Mrs. Bagnet developes an exact system; sitting with eve her; allotting to every portion of pork its own portion of pot-l potatoes, and even mustard! and serving it out complete. Having l out the beer from a can, and thus supplied the mess with all things n Bagnet proceeds to satisfy her own hunger, which is in a healthy stat the mess, if the table furniture may be so denominated, is chiefly utensils of horn and tin, that have done duty in several parts of the Woolwich's knife, in particular, which is of the oyster kind, with feature of a strong shutting-up movement which frequently balks t that young musician, is mentioned as having gone in various hands round of foreign service.

The dinner done, Mrs. Bagnet, assisted by the younger branche their own cups and platters, knives and forks), makes all the dir shine as brightly as before, and puts it all away; first sweeping the end that Mr. Bagnet and the visitor may not be retarded in the sm pipes. These household cares involve much pattening and counte the back yard, and considerable use of a pail, which is finally so ha in the ablutions of Mrs. Bagnet herself. That old girl reappeari quite fresh, and sitting down to her needlework, then and only the being only then to be considered as entirely off her mind—Mr. B the trooper to state his case.

This, Mr. George does with great discretion; appearing to addr Mr. Bagnet, but having an eye solely on the old girl all the time, himself. She, equally discreet, busies herself with her needlewo fully stated, Mr. Bagnet resorts to his standard artifice for the m discipline.

"That's the whole of it, is it, George?" says he.

"That's the whole of it."

"You act according to my opinion?"

"I shall be guided," replies George, "entirely by it."

"Old girl," says Mr. Bagnet, "give him my opinion. You know what it is."

It is, that he cannot have too little to do with people who are too and cannot be too careful of interference with matters he does no that the plain rule, is to do nothing in the dark, to be a party to n handed or mysterious, and never to put his foot where he cannot s This, in effect, is Mr. Bagnet's opinion, as delivered through the ol so relieves Mr. George's mind, by confirming his own opinion and doubts, that he composes himself to smoke another pipe on that e

casion, and to have a talk over old times with the whole Bagnet family, according to their various ranges of experience.

Through these means it comes to pass, that Mr. George does not again rise to his full height in that parlour until the time is drawing on when the bassoon and fife are expected by a British public at the theatre; and as it takes time even then for Mr. George, in his domestic character of Bluffy, to take leave of Quebec and Malta, and insinuate a sponsorial shilling into the pocket of his godson, with felicitations on his success in life, it is dark when Mr. George again turns his face towards Lincoln's Inn Fields.

"A family home," he ruminates, as he marches along, "however small it is, makes a man like me look lonely. But it's well I never made that evolution of matrimony. I shouldn't have been fit for it. I am such a vagabond still, even at my present time of life, that I couldn't hold to the gallery a month together, if it was a regular pursuit, or if I couldn't camp there, gipsy-fashion. Come! I disgrace nobody and cumber nobody; that's something. I have not done that, for many a long year!"

So he whistles it off, and marches on.

Arrived in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and mounting Mr. Tulkinghorn's stair, he finds the outer door closed, and the chambers shut: but the trooper not knowing much about outer doors, and the staircase being dark besides, he is yet fumbling and groping about, hoping to discover a bell-handle or to open the door for himself, when Mr. Tulkinghorn comes up the stairs quietly, of course, and angrily asks:

"Who is that? What are you doing there?"

"I ask your pardon, sir. It's George. The serjeant."

"And couldn't George, the serjeant, see that my door was locked?"

"Why, no, sir, I couldn't. At any rate, I didn't," says the trooper, rather nettled.

"Have you changed your mind? or are you in the same mind?" Mr. Tulkinghorn demands. But he knows well enough at a glance.

"In the same mind, sir."

"I thought so. That's sufficient. You can go. So, you are the man," says Mr. Tulkinghorn, opening his door with the key, "in whose lodging-place Mr. Gridley was found?"

"Yes, I *am* the man," says the trooper, stopping two or three stairs down. "What then, sir?"

"What then? I don't like your associates. You should not have seen the inside of my door this morning, if I had thought of your being that man. Gridley? A threatening, murderous, dangerous fellow."

With these words, spoken in an unusually high tone for him, the lawyer goes into his rooms, and shuts the door with a thundering noise.

Mr. George takes his dismissal in great dudgeon; the greater, because a clerk coming up the stairs has heard the last words of all, and evidently applies them to him. "A pretty character to bear," the trooper growls with a hasty oath, as he strides down-stairs. "A threatening, murderous, dangerous fellow!" and looking up, he sees the clerk looking down at him, and marking him as he passes a lamp. This so intensifies his dudgeon, that for five minutes he is in an ill-humour. But he whistles that off, like the rest of it; and marches home to the Shooting Gallery.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE IRONMASTER.

SIR LEICESTER DEDLOCK has got the better, for the time being, of the family gout; and is once more, in a literal no less than in a figurative point of view, upon his legs. He is at his place in Lincolnshire; but the waters are out again on the low-lying grounds, and the cold and damp steal into Chesney Wold, though well defended, and eke into Sir Leicester's bones. The blazing fire of faggot and coal—Dedlock timber and antediluvian forest—that blaze upon the broad wide hearths, and wink in the twilight on the frowning woods, sullen to see how trees are sacrificed, do not exclude the enemy. The hot water pipes that trail themselves all over the house, the cushioned doors and windows, and the screens and curtains, fail to supply the fires' deficiencies, and to satisfy Sir Leicester's need. Hence the fashionable intelligence proclaims one morning to the listening earth, that Lady Dedlock is expected shortly to return to town for a few weeks.

It is a melancholy truth that even great men have their poor relations. Indeed great men have often more than their fair share of poor relations; inasmuch as very red blood of the superior quality, like inferior blood unlawfully shed, will cry aloud, and *will* be heard. Sir Leicester's cousins, in the remotest degree, are so many Murders, in the respect that they "will out." Among whom there are cousins who are so poor, that one might almost dare to think it would have been the happier for them never to have been plated links upon the Dedlock chain of gold, but to have been made of common iron at first, and done base service.

Service, however (with a few limited reservations; genteel but not profitable), they may not do, being of the Dedlock dignity. So they visit their richer cousins, and get into debt when they can, and live but shabbily when they can't, and find—the women no husbands, and the men no wives—and ride in borrowed carriages, and sit at feasts that are never of their own making, and so go through high life. The rich family sum has been divided by so many figures, and they are the something over that nobody knows what to do with.

Everybody on Sir Leicester Dedlock's side of the question, and of his way of thinking, would appear to be his cousin more or less. From my Lord Boodle, through the Duke of Foodle, down to Noodle, Sir Leicester, like a glorious spider, stretches his threads of relationship. But while he is stately in the cousinship of the Everybodys, he is a kind and generous man, according to his dignified way, in the cousinship of the Nobodys; and at the present time, in despite of the damp, he stays out the visit of several such cousins at Chesney Wold, with the constancy of a martyr.

Of these, foremost in the front rank stands Volumnia Dedlock, a young lady (of sixty), who is doubly highly related; having the honour to be a poor relation, by the mother's side, to another great family. Miss Volumnia, displaying in early life a pretty talent for cutting ornaments out of coloured paper, and also for singing to the guitar in the Spanish tongue, and propounding French conundrums in country houses, passed the twenty years of her existence between twenty and forty in a sufficiently agreeable manner. Lapsing then out of date, and being considered to bore mankind by her vocal performances in the Spanish language, she retired to Bath; where she lives slenderly on an annual present from Sir Leicester, and whence she makes occasional resurrections in the country houses of her cousins. She has an extensive acquaintance at Bath among appalling old gentle-

h thin legs and nankeen trousers, and is of high standing in that dreary
ut she is a little dreaded elsewhere, in consequence of an indiscreet pro-
the article of rouge, and persistency in an obsolete pearl necklace like a
f little bird's-eggs.
y country in a wholesome state, Volumnia would be a clear case for the
list. Efforts have been made to get her on it; and when William Buffy
, it was fully expected that her name would be put down for a couple of
a-year. But William Buffy somehow discovered, contrary to all expecta-
t these were not the times when it could be done; and this was the first
lication Sir Leicester Dedlock had conveyed to him, that the country was
pieces.
is likewise the Honourable Bob Stables, who can make warm mashes
skill of a veterinary surgeon, and is a better shot than most gamekeepers.
been for some time particularly desirous to serve his country in a post of
noluments, unaccompanied by any trouble or responsibility. In a well-
d body politic, this natural desire on the part of a spirited young gentle-
highly connected, would be speedily recognised; but somehow William
und when he came in, that these were not times in which he could man-
little matter, either; and this was the second indication Sir Leicester
had conveyed to him, that the country was going to pieces.
est of the cousins are ladies and gentlemen of various ages and capacities;
r part, amiable and sensible, and likely to have done well enough in life
ould have overcome their cousinship; as it is, they are almost all a little
by it, and lounge in purposeless and listless paths, and seem to be quite
at a loss how to dispose of themselves, as anybody else can be how to
of them.
society, and where not, my Lady Dedlock reigns supreme. Beautiful,
accomplished, and powerful in her little world (for the world of fashion
stretch *all* the way from pole to pole), her influence in Sir Leicester's
however haughty and indifferent her manner, is greatly to improve it and
. The cousins, even those older cousins who were paralysed when Sir
r married her, do her feudal homage; and the Honourable Bob Stables
peats to some chosen person, between breakfast and lunch, his favourite
remark, that she is the best-groomed woman in the whole stud.
the guests in the long drawing-room at Chesney Wold this dismal night,
e step on the Ghost's Walk (inaudible here, however,) might be the step
ceased cousin shut out in the cold. It is near bed-time. Bedroom fires
ightly all over the house, raising ghosts of grim furniture on wall and
. Bedroom candlesticks bristle on the distant table by the door, and
yawn on ottomans. Cousins at the piano, cousins at the soda-water tray,
rising from the card-table, cousins gathered round the fire. Standing on
of his own peculiar fire (for there are two), Sir Leicester. On the
side of the broad hearth, my Lady at her table. Volumnia, as one of
e privileged cousins, in a luxurious chair between them. Sir Leicester
, with magnificent displeasure, at the rouge and the pearl necklace.
casionally meet on my staircase here," drawls Volumnia, whose thoughts
are already hopping up it to bed, after a long evening of very desultory
ne of the prettiest girls, I think, that I ever saw in my life."
protégée of my Lady's," observes Sir Leicester.
ought so. I felt sure that some uncommon eye must have picked that
. She really is a marvel. A dolly sort of beauty perhaps," says Miss
a, reserving her own sort, "but in its way, perfect; such bloom I never

Sir Leicester, with his magnificent glance of displeasure at the rouge, appear
say so too.

"Indeed," remarks my Lady, languidly, "if there is any uncommon eye in
case, it is Mrs. Rouncewell's, and not mine. Rosa is her discovery."

"Your maid, I suppose?"

"No. My anything; pet—secretary—messenger—I don't know what."

"You like to have her about you, as you would like to have a flower, or a b
or a picture, or a poodle—no, not a poodle, though—or anything else that
equally pretty?" says Volumnia, sympathising. "Yes, how charming n
and how well that delightful old soul Mrs. Rouncewell is looking. She mus
an immense age, and yet she is as active and handsome!—She is the dea
friend I have, positively!"

Sir Leicester feels it to be right and fitting that the housekeeper of Ches
Wold should be a remarkable person. Apart from that, he has a real regard
Mrs. Rouncewell, and likes to hear her praised. So he says, "You are ri
Volumnia;" which Volumnia is extremely glad to hear.

"She has no daughter of her own, has she?"

"Mrs. Rouncewell? No, Volumnia. She has a son. Indeed, she
two."

My Lady, whose chronic malady of boredom has been sadly aggravated
Volumnia this evening, glances wearily towards the candlesticks and heave
noiseless sigh.

"And it is a remarkable example of the confusion into which the present
has fallen; of the obliteration of landmarks, the opening of floodgates, and
uprooting of distinctions," says Sir Leicester with stately gloom; "that I h
been informed, by Mr. Tulkinghorn, that Mrs. Rouncewell's son has been inv
to go into Parliament."

Miss Volumnia utters a little sharp scream.

"Yes, indeed," repeats Sir Leicester. "Into Parliament."

"I never heard of such a thing! Good gracious, what is the man?" exclai
Volumnia.

"He is called, I believe—an—Ironmaster." Sir Leicester says it slowly,
with gravity and doubt, as not being sure but that he is called a Lead-mistre
or that the right word may be some other word expressive of some other relati
ship to some other metal.

Volumnia utters another little scream.

"He has declined the proposal, if my information from Mr. Tulkinghorn
correct, as I have no doubt it is, Mr. Tulkinghorn being always correct and ex
still that does not," says Sir Leicester, "that does not lessen the anomaly; whic
fraught with strange considerations—startling considerations, as it appears to m

Miss Volumnia rising with a look candlestick-wards, Sir Leicester poli
performs the grand tour of the drawing-room, brings one, and lights it at
Lady's shaded lamp.

"I must beg you, my Lady," he says while doing so, "to remain a
moments; for this individual of whom I speak, arrived this evening shortly be
dinner, and requested—in a very becoming note;" Sir Leicester, with
habitual regard to truth, dwells upon it; "I am bound to say, in a very becom
and well-expressed note—the favour of a short interview with yourself and my
on the subject of this young girl. As it appeared that he wished to de
to-night, I replied that we would see him before retiring."

Miss Volumnia with a third little scream takes flight, wishing her hosts—O I
—well rid of the—what is it?—Ironmaster!

The other cousins soon disperse, to the last cousin there. Sir Leicester r

the bell. "Make my compliments to Mr. Rouncewell, in the housekeeper's apartments, and say I can receive him now."

My Lady, who has heard all this with slight attention outwardly, looks towards Mr. Rouncewell as he comes in. He is a little over fifty perhaps, of a good figure, like his mother; and has a clear voice, a broad forehead from which his dark hair has retired, and a shrewd, though open face. He is a responsible-looking gentleman dressed in black, portly enough, but strong and active. Has a perfectly natural and easy air, and is not in the least embarrassed by the great presence into which he comes.

"Sir Leicester and Lady Dedlock, as I have already apologised for intruding on you, I cannot do better than be very brief. I thank you, Sir Leicester."

The head of the Dedlocks has motioned towards a sofa between himself and my Lady. Mr. Rouncewell quietly takes his seat there.

"In these busy times, when so many great undertakings are in progress, people like myself have so many workmen in so many places, that we are always on the flight."

Sir Leicester is content enough that the ironmaster should feel that there is no hurry there; there, in that ancient house, rooted in that quiet park, where the ivy and the moss have had time to mature, and the gnarled and warted elms, and the umbrageous oaks, stand deep in the fern and leaves of a hundred years; and where the sun-dial on the terrace has dumbly recorded for centuries that Time, which was as much the property of every Dedlock—while he lasted—as the house and lands. Sir Leicester sits down in an easy-chair, opposing his repose and that of Chesney Wold to the restless flights of ironmasters.

"Lady Dedlock has been so kind," proceeds Mr. Rouncewell, with a respectful glance and a bow that way, "as to place near her a young beauty of the name of Rosa. Now, my son has fallen in love with Rosa; and has asked my consent to his proposing marriage to her, and to their becoming engaged if she will take him—which I suppose she will. I have never seen Rosa until to-day, but I have some confidence in my son's good sense—even in love. I find her what he represents her, to the best of my judgment; and my mother speaks of her with great commendation."

"She in all respects deserves it," says my Lady.

"I am happy, Lady Dedlock, that you say so; and I need not comment on the value to me of your kind opinion of her."

"That," observes Sir Leicester, with unspeakable grandeur; for he thinks the ironmaster a little too glib; "must be quite unnecessary."

"Quite unnecessary, Sir Leicester. Now, my son is a very young man, and Rosa is a very young woman. As I made my way, so my son must make his; and his being married at present is out of the question. But supposing I gave my consent to his engaging himself to this pretty girl, if this pretty girl will engage herself to him, I think it a piece of candour to say at once—I am sure, Sir Leicester and Lady Dedlock, you will understand and excuse me—I should make it a condition that she did not remain at Chesney Wold. Therefore, before communicating further with my son, I take the liberty of saying that if her removal would be in any way inconvenient or objectionable, I will hold the matter over with him for any reasonable time, and leave it precisely where it is."

Not remain at Chesney Wold! Make it a condition! All Sir Leicester's old misgivings relative to Wat Tyler, and the people in the iron districts who do nothing but turn out by torchlight, come in a shower upon his head; the fine grey hair of which, as well as of his whiskers, actually stirs with indignation.

"Am I to understand, sir," says Sir Leicester, "and is my Lady to understand;" he brings her in thus specially, first, as a point of gallantry, and next as

a point of prudence, having great reliance on her sense; "am I to understand, Mr. Rouncewell, and is my Lady to understand, sir, that you consider this young woman too good for Chesney Wold, or likely to be injured by remaining here?"

"Certainly not, Sir Leicester."

"I am glad to hear it." Sir Leicester very lofty indeed.

"Pray, Mr. Rouncewell," says My Lady, warning Sir Leicester off with the slightest gesture of her pretty hand, as if he were a fly, "explain to me what you mean."

"Willingly, Lady Dedlock. There is nothing I could desire more."

Addressing her composed face, whose intelligence, however, is too quick and active to be concealed by any studied impassiveness, however habitual, to the strong Saxon face of the visitor, a picture of resolution and perseverance, my Lady listens with attention, occasionally slightly bending her head.

"I am the son of your housekeeper, Lady Dedlock, and passed my childhood about this house. My mother has lived here half a century, and will die here I have no doubt. She is one of those examples—perhaps as good a one as there is—of love, and attachment, and fidelity in such a station, which England may well be proud of; but of which no order can appropriate the whole pride or the whole merit, because such an instance bespeaks high worth on two sides; on the great side assuredly; on the small one, no less assuredly."

Sir Leicester snorts a little to hear the law laid down in this way; but in his honour and his love of truth, he freely, though silently, admits the justice of the ironmaster's proposition.

"Pardon me for saying what is so obvious, but I wouldn't have it hastily supposed," with the least turn of his eyes towards Sir Leicester, "that I am ashamed of my mother's position here, or wanting in all just respect for Chesney Wold and the family. I certainly may have desired—I certainly have desired, Lady Dedlock—that my mother should retire after so many years, and end her days with me. But, as I have found that to sever this strong bond would be to break her heart, I have long abandoned that idea."

Sir Leicester very magnificent again, at the notion of Mrs. Rouncewell being spirited off from her natural home, to end her days with an ironmaster.

"I have been," proceeds the visitor, in a modest clear way, "an apprentice, and a workman. I have lived on workman's wages, years and years, and beyond a certain point have had to educate myself. My wife was a foreman's daughter, and plainly brought up. We have three daughters, besides this son of whom I have spoken; and being fortunately able to give them greater advantages than we have had ourselves, we have educated them well; very well. It has been one of our great cares and pleasures to make them worthy of any station."

A little boastfulness in his fatherly tone here, as if he added in his heart, "even of the Chesney Wold station." Not a little more magnificence, therefore, on the part of Sir Leicester.

"All this is so frequent, Lady Dedlock, where I live, and among the class to which I belong, that what would be generally called unequal marriages are not of such rare occurrence with us as elsewhere. A son will sometimes make it known to his father that he has fallen in love, say with a young woman in the factory. The father, who once worked in a factory himself, will be a little disappointed at first, very possibly. It may be that he had other views for his son. However, the chances are, that having ascertained the young woman to be of unblemished character, he will say to his son, 'I must be quite sure you are in earnest here. This is a serious matter for both of you. Therefore I shall have this girl educated for two years'—or, it may be—'I shall place this girl at the same school with your sisters for such a time, during which you will give me your word and honour

to see her only so often. If, at the expiration of that time, when she has so far profited by her advantages as that you may be upon a fair equality, you are both in the same mind, I will do my part to make you happy.' I know of several cases such as I describe, my Lady, and I think they indicate to me my own course now."

Sir Leicester's magnificence explodes. Calmly, but terribly.

"Mr. Rouncewell," says Sir Leicester, with his right hand in the breast of his blue coat—the attitude of state in which he is painted in the gallery: "do you draw a parallel between Chesney Wold, and a——" here he resists a disposition to choke—— "a factory?"

"I need not reply, Sir Leicester, that the two places are very different; but, for the purposes of this case, I think a parallel may be justly drawn between them."

Sir Leicester directs his majestic glance down one side of the long drawing-room, and up the other, before he can believe that he is awake.

"Are you aware, sir, that this young woman whom my Lady—my Lady—has placed near her person, was brought up at the village school outside the gates?"

"Sir Leicester, I am quite aware of it. A very good school it is, and handsomely supported by this family."

"Then, Mr. Rouncewell," returns Sir Leicester, "the application of what you have said, is, to me, incomprehensible."

"Will it be more comprehensible, Sir Leicester, if I say," the ironmaster is reddening a little, "that I do not regard the village-school as teaching everything desirable to be known by my son's wife?"

From the village school of Chesney Wold, intact as it is this minute, to the whole framework of society; from the whole framework of society, to the aforesaid framework receiving tremendous cracks in consequence of people (ironmasters, lead-mistresses, and what not) not minding their catechism, and getting out of the station unto which they are called—necessarily and for ever, according to Sir Leicester's rapid logic, the first station in which they happen to find themselves; and from that, to their educating other people out of *their* stations, and so obliterating the landmarks, and opening the floodgates, and all the rest of it; this is the swift progress of the Dedlock mind.

"My Lady, I beg your pardon. Permit me, for one moment!" She has given a faint indication of intending to speak. "Mr. Rouncewell, our views of duty, and our views of station, and our views of education, and our views of—in short, *all* our views—are so diametrically opposed, that to prolong this discussion must be repellant to your feelings, and repellant to my own. This young woman is honoured with my Lady's notice and favour. If she wishes to withdraw herself from that notice and favour, or if she chooses to place herself under the influence of any one who may in his peculiar opinions—you will allow me to say, in his peculiar opinions, though I readily admit that he is not accountable for them to me—who may, in his peculiar opinions, withdraw her from that notice and favour, she is at any time at liberty to do so. We are obliged to you for the plainness with which you have spoken. It will have no effect of itself, one way or other, on the young woman's position here. Beyond this, we can make no terms; and here we beg—if you will be so good—to leave the subject."

The visitor pauses a moment to give my Lady an opportunity, but she says nothing. He then rises and replies:

"Sir Leicester and Lady Dedlock, allow me to thank you for your attention, and only to observe that I shall very seriously recommend my son to conquer his present inclinations. Good night!"

"Mr. Rouncewell," says Sir Leicester, with all the nature of shining in him, "it is late, and the roads are dark. I hope your precious but that you will allow my Lady and myself to offer you t of Chesney Wold, for to-night at least."

"I hope so," adds my Lady.

"I am much obliged to you, but I have to travel all night, in or distant part of the country, punctually at an appointed time in the m

Therewith the ironmaster takes his departure; Sir Leicester ring and my Lady rising as he leaves the room.

When my Lady goes to her boudoir, she sits down thoughtfull and, inattentive to the Ghost's Walk, looks at Rosa, writing in an Presently my Lady calls her.

"Come to me, child. Tell me the truth. Are you in love?"

"O! My Lady!"

My Lady, looking at the downcast and blushing face, says smiling

"Who is it? Is it Mrs. Rouncewell's grandson?"

"Yes, if you please, my Lady. But I don't know that I am in l —yet."

"Yet, you silly little thing! Do you know that he loves *you*, yet

"I think he likes me a little, my Lady." And Rosa bursts into t

Is this Lady Dedlock standing beside the village beauty, smooth hair with that motherly touch, and watching her with eyes so fu interest? Aye, indeed it is!

"Listen to me, child. You are young and true, and I believe you to me."

"Indeed I am, my Lady. Indeed there is nothing in the world I to show how much."

"And I don't think you would wish to leave me just yet, Ro lover?"

"No, my Lady! O no!" Rosa looks up for the first time, qui at the thought.

"Confide in me, my child. Don't fear me. I wish you to be ha make you so—if I can make anybody happy on this earth."

Rosa, with fresh tears, kneels at her feet and kisses her hand. M the hand with which she has caught it, and, standing with her eyes fire, puts it about and about between her own two hands, and gr fall. Seeing her so absorbed, Rosa softly withdraws; but still my are on the fire.

In search of what? Of any hand that is no more, of any han was, of any touch that might have magically changed her life? listen to the Ghost's Walk, and think what step does it most re man's? A woman's? The pattering of a little child's feet, ever co —on? Some melancholy influence is upon her; or why should so close the doors, and sit alone upon the hearth so desolate?

Volumnia is away next day, and all the cousins are scattered b Not a cousin of the batch but is amazed to hear from Sir Leicester, time, of the obliteration of landmarks, and opening of floodgates, of the framework of society, manifested through Mrs. Rouncewell's cousin of the batch but is really indignant, and connects it with the William Buffy when in office, and really does feel deprived of a country—or the pension list—or something—by fraud and wro Volumnia, she is handed down the great staircase by Sir Leicester, upon the theme, as if there were a general rising in the North of

er rouge-pot and pearl necklace. And thus, with a clatter of maids and for it is one appurtenance of their cousinship, that, however difficult they l it to keep themselves, they *must* keep maids and valets—the cousins to the four winds of heaven; and the one wintry wind that blows to-day shower from the trees near the deserted house, as if all the cousins had anged into leaves.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE YOUNG MAN.

Y WOLD is shut up, carpets are rolled into great scrolls in corners of ess rooms, bright damask does penance in brown holland, carving and puts on mortification, and the Dedlock ancestors retire from the light of n. Around and around the house the leaves fall thick—but never fast, come circling down with a dead lightness that is sombre and slow. Let lener sweep and sweep the turf as he will, and press the leaves into full , and wheel them off, still they lie ankle-deep. Howls the shrill wind hesney Wold; the sharp rain beats, the windows rattle, and the chimneys Mists hide in the avenues, veil the points of view, and move in funeral- oss the rising grounds. On all the house there is a cold, blank smell, smell of a little church, though something dryer: suggesting that the l buried Dedlocks walk there, in the long nights, and leave the flavour of ves behind them.

e house in town, which is rarely in the same mind as Chesney Wold at e time; seldom rejoicing when it rejoices, or mourning when it mourns, g when a Dedlock dies; the house in town shines out awakened. As d bright as so much state may be, as delicately redolent of pleasant scents r no trace of winter as hothouse flowers can make it; soft and hushed, so ticking of the clocks and the crisp burning of the fires alone disturb the in the rooms; it seems to wrap those chilled bones of Sir Leicester's in -coloured wool. And Sir Leicester is glad to repose in dignified con- t before the great fire in the library, condescendingly perusing the backs ooks, or honouring the fine arts with a glance of approbation. For he ictures, ancient and modern. Some of the Fancy Ball School in which sionally condescends to become a master, which would be best catalogued miscellaneous articles in a sale. As, "Three high-backed chairs, a table r, long-necked bottle (containing wine), one flask, one Spanish female's , three-quarter face portrait of Miss Jogg the model, and a suit of armour ng Don Quixote." Or, "One stone terrace (cracked), one gondola in , one Venetian senator's dress complete, richly embroidered white satin with profile portrait of Miss Jogg the model, one scimetar superbly in gold with jewelled handle, elaborate Moorish dress (very rare), and "

lkinghorn comes and goes pretty often; there being estate business to s to be renewed, and so on. He sees my Lady pretty often, too; and he re as composed, and as indifferent, and take as little heed of one another. Yet it may be that my Lady fears this Mr. Tulkinghorn, and that he . It may be that he pursues her doggedly and steadily, with no touch of tion, remorse, or pity. It may be that her beauty, and all the state and

brilliancy surrounding her, only gives him the greater zest for what he is set upon, and makes him the more inflexible in it. Whether he be cold and cruel, whether immovable in what he has made his duty, whether absorbed in love of power, whether determined to have nothing hidden from him in ground where he has burrowed among secrets all his life, whether he in his heart despises the splendour of which he is a distant beam, whether he is always treasuring up slights and offences in the affability of his gorgeous clients—whether he be any of this, or all of this, it may be that my Lady had better have five thousand pairs of fashionable eyes upon her, in distrustful vigilance, than the two eyes of this rusty lawyer, with his wisp of neckcloth and his dull black breeches tied with ribbons at the knees.

Sir Leicester sits in my Lady's room—that room in which Mr. Tulkinghorn read the affidavit in Jarndyce and Jarndyce—particularly complacent. My Lady—as on that day—sits before the fire with her screen in her hand. Sir Leicester is particularly complacent, because he has found in his newspaper some congenial remarks bearing directly on the floodgates and the framework of society. They apply so happily to the late case, that Sir Leicester has come from the library to my Lady's room expressly to read them aloud. "The man who wrote this article," he observes by way of preface, nodding at the fire as if he were nodding down at the man from a Mount, "has a well-balanced mind."

The man's mind is not so well balanced but that he bores my Lady, who, after a languid effort to listen, or rather a languid resignation of herself to a show of listening, becomes distraught, and falls into a contemplation of the fire as if it were her fire at Chesney Wold, and she had never left it. Sir Leicester, quite unconscious, reads on through his double eye-glass, occasionally stopping to remove his glass and express approval, as "Very true indeed," "Very properly put," "I have frequently made the same remark myself;" invariably losing his place after each observation, and going up and down the column to find it again.

Sir Leicester is reading, with infinite gravity and state, when the door opens, and the Mercury in powder makes this strange announcement:

"The young man, my Lady, of the name of Guppy."

Sir Leicester pauses, stares, repeats in a killing voice:

"The young man of the name of Guppy?"

Looking round, he beholds the young man of the name of Guppy, much discomfited, and not presenting a very impressive letter of introduction in his manner and appearance.

"Pray," says Sir Leicester to Mercury, "what do you mean by announcing with this abruptness a young man of the name of Guppy?"

"I beg your pardon, Sir Leicester, but my Lady said she would see the young man whenever he called. I was not aware that you were here, Sir Leicester."

With this apology, Mercury directs a scornful and indignant look at the young man of the name of Guppy, which plainly says, "What do you come calling here for, and getting *me* into a row?"

"It's quite right. I gave him those directions," says my Lady. "Let the young man wait."

"By no means, my Lady. Since he has your orders to come, I will not interrupt you." Sir Leicester in his gallantry retires, rather declining to accept a bow from the young man as he goes out, and majestically supposing him to be some shoemaker of intrusive appearance.

Lady Dedlock looks imperiously at her visitor, when the servant has left the room; casting her eyes over him from head to foot. She suffers him to stand by the door, and asks him what he wants?

"That your ladyship would have the kindness to oblige me with a little conversation," returns Mr. Guppy, embarrassed.

"You are, of course, the person who has written me so many letters?"

"Several, your ladyship. Several, before your ladyship condescended to favour me with an answer."

"And could you not take the same means of rendering a conversation unnecessary? Can you not still?"

Mr. Guppy screws his mouth into a silent "No!" and shakes his head.

"You have been strangely importunate. If it should appear, after all, that what you have to say does not concern me—and I don't know how it can, and don't expect that it will—you will allow me to cut you short with but little ceremony. Say what you have to say, if you please."

My Lady, with a careless toss of her screen, turns herself towards the fire again, sitting almost with her back to the young man of the name of Guppy.

"With your ladyship's permission, then," says the young man, "I will now enter on my business. Hem! I am, as I told your ladyship in my first letter, in the law. Being in the law, I have learnt the habit of not committing myself in writing, and therefore I did not mention to your ladyship the name of the firm with which I am connected, and in which my standing—and I may add income—is tolerably good. I may now state to your ladyship, in confidence, that the name of that firm is Kenge and Carboy, of Lincoln's Inn; which may not be altogether unknown to your ladyship in connexion with the case in Chancery of Jarndyce and Jarndyce."

My Lady's figure begins to be expressive of some attention. She has ceased to toss the screen, and holds it as if she were listening.

"Now, I may say to your ladyship at once," says Mr. Guppy, a little emboldened, "it is no matter arising out of Jarndyce and Jarndyce that made me so desirous to speak to your ladyship, which conduct I have no doubt did appear, and does appear, obtrusive—in fact, almost blackguardly." After waiting for a moment to receive some assurance to the contrary, and not receiving any, Mr. Guppy proceeds. "If it had been Jarndyce and Jarndyce, I should have gone at once to your ladyship's solicitor, Mr. Tulkinghorn of the Fields. I have the pleasure of being acquainted with Mr. Tulkinghorn—at least we move when we meet one another—and if it had been any business of that sort, I should have gone to him."

My Lady turns a little round, and says "You had better sit down."

"Thank your ladyship." Mr. Guppy does so. "Now, your ladyship;" Mr. Guppy refers to a little slip of paper on which he has made small notes of his line of argument, and which seems to involve him in the densest obscurity whenever he looks at it; "I—O yes!—I place myself entirely in your ladyship's hands. If your ladyship was to make any complaint to Kenge and Carboy, or to Mr. Tulkinghorn, of the present visit, I should be placed in a very disagreeable situation. That, I openly admit. Consequently, I rely upon your ladyship's honour."

My Lady, with a disdainful gesture of the hand that holds the screen, assures him of his being worth no complaint from her.

"Thank your ladyship," says Mr. Guppy, "quite satisfactory. Now—I—dash it!—The fact is, that I put down a head or two here of the order of the points I thought of touching upon, and they're written short, and I can't quite make out what they mean. If your ladyship will excuse me taking it to the window half a moment, I——"

Mr. Guppy going to the window, tumbles into a pair of love-birds, to whom he says in his confusion, "I beg your pardon, I am sure." This does not tend to the greater legibility of his notes. He murmurs, growing warm and red, and holding the slip of paper now close to his eyes, now a long way off, "C. S. What's C. S. for? O! 'E. S.!' O, I know! Yes, to be sure!" And comes back enlightened.

"I am not aware," says Mr. Guppy, standing midway between my chair, "whether your ladyship ever happened to hear of, or to see of the name of Miss Esther Summerson."

My Lady's eyes look at him full. "I saw a young lady of that ago. This past autumn."

"Now, did it strike your ladyship that she was like anybod Guppy, crossing his arms, holding his head on one side, and scratch of his mouth with his memoranda.

My Lady removes her eyes from him no more.

"No."

"Not like your ladyship's family?"

"No."

"I think your ladyship," says Mr. Guppy, "can hardly rememb merson's face?"

"I remember the young lady very well. What has this to do w

"Your ladyship, I do assure you, that having Miss Summerso printed on my art—which I mention in confidence—I found, wh honour of going over your ladyship's mansion of Chesney Wold, w out in the county of Lincolnshire with a friend, such a resemblance Esther Summerson and your ladyship's own portrait, that it comp me over; so much so, that I didn't at the moment even know w knocked me over. And now I have the honour of beholding your (I have often, since that, taken the liberty of looking at your ladysh riage in the park, when I dare say you was not aware of me, but your ladyship so near,) it's really more surprising than I thought it.

Young man of the name of Guppy! There have been times, wh in strongholds, and had unscrupulous attendants within call, when of yours would not have been worth a minute's purchase, with t eyes looking at you as they look at this moment.

My Lady, slowly using her little hand-screen as a fan, asks hir he supposes that his taste for likenesses has to do with her?

"Your ladyship," replies Mr. Guppy, again referring to his coming to that. Dash these notes! O! 'Mrs. Chadband.' Guppy draws his chair a little forward, and seats himself again. clines in her chair composedly, though with a trifle less of graceful e perhaps; and never falters in her steady gaze. "A—stop a mir Mr. Guppy refers again. "E. S. twice? O yes! yes, I see right on."

Rolling up the slip of paper as an instrument to point his spe Guppy proceeds.

"Your ladyship, there is a mystery about Miss Esther Summers bringing up. I am informed of that fact, because—which I mentior —I know it in the way of my profession at Kenge and Carboy' have already mentioned to your ladyship, Miss Summerson's imag on my art. If I could clear this mystery for her, or prove her to b or find that having the honour to be a remote branch of your lad she had a right to be made a party in Jarndyce and Jarndyce, why, a sort of a claim upon Miss Summerson to look with an eye of more on my proposals than she has exactly done as yet. In fact, as favoured them at all."

A kind of angry smile just dawns upon my Lady's face.

"Now, it's a very singular circumstance, your ladyship," say "*though* one of those circumstances that do fall in the way of

ich I may call myself, for though not admitted, yet I have had a present
icles made to me by Kenge and Carboy, on my mother's advancing
principal of her little income the money for the stamp, which comes
at I have encountered the person who lived as servant with the lady
ght Miss Summerson up, before Mr. Jarndyce took charge of her.
was a Miss Barbary, your ladyship."
dead colour on my Lady's face, reflected from the screen which has
lk ground, and which she holds in her raised hand as if she had for-
or is it a dreadful paleness that has fallen on her?
our ladyship," says Mr. Guppy, "ever happen to hear of Miss Bar-

't know. I think so. Yes."
Miss Barbary at all connected with your ladyship's family?"
y's lips move, but they utter nothing. She shakes her head.
connected?" says Mr. Guppy. "O! Not to your ladyship's know-
haps? Ah! But might be? Yes." After each of these interroga-
has inclined her head. "Very good! Now, this Miss Barbary was
close—seems to have been extraordinarily close for a female, females
nerally (in common life at least) rather given to conversation—and my
ever had an idea whether she possessed a single relative. On one occa-
nnly one, she seems to have been confidential to my witness, on a
nt; and she then told her that the little girl's real name was not Esther
n, but Esther Hawdon."
od!"
ppy stares. Lady Dedlock sits before him, looking him through, with
dark shade upon her face, in the same attitude even to the holding of
, with her lips a little apart, her brow a little contracted, but, for the
dead. He sees her consciousness return, sees a tremor pass across her
a ripple over water, sees her lips shake, sees her compose them by a
rt, sees her force herself back to the knowledge of his presence, and of
has said. All this, so quickly, that her exclamation and her dead con-
m to have passed away like the features of those long-preserved dead
metimes opened up in tombs, which, struck by the air like lightning,
a breath.
ladyship is acquainted with the name of Hawdon?"
e heard it before."
of any collateral, or remote, branch of your ladyship's family?"

your ladyship," says Mr. Guppy, "I come to the last point of the case,
have got it up. It's going on, and I shall gather it up closer and
it goes on. Your ladyship must know—if your ladyship don't happen,
ance, to know already—that there was found dead at the house of a
med Krook, near Chancery Lane, some time ago, a law-writer in great
Upon which law-writer there was an inquest; and which law-writer
nonymous character, his name being unknown. But, your ladyship, I
wered very lately, that that law-writer's name was Hawdon."
what is *that* to me?"
your ladyship, that's the question! Now, your ladyship, a queer thing
after that man's death. A lady started up; a disguised lady, your
who went to look at the scene of action, and went to look at his grave,
a crossing-sweeping boy to show it her. If your ladyship would wish
e boy produced in corroboration of this statement, I can lay my hand
at any time."

The wretched boy is nothing to my Lady, and she does not wish to have produced.

"Oh, I assure your ladyship it's a very queer start indeed," says Mr. Gu "If you was to hear him tell about the rings that sparkled on her fingers she took her glove off, you'd think it quite romantic."

There are diamonds glittering on the hand that holds the screen. My L trifles with the screen, and makes them glitter more; again with that expres which in other times might have been so dangerous to the young man of name of Guppy.

"It was supposed, your ladyship, that he left no rag or scrap behind by which he could be possibly identified. But he did. He left a bundle of letters."

The screen still goes, as before. All this time, her eyes never once rel him.

"They were taken and secreted. And to-morrow night, your ladyship, will come into my possession."

"Still I ask you, what is this to me?"

"Your ladyship, I conclude with that." Mr. Guppy rises. "If you t there's enough, in this chain of circumstances put together—in the undou strong likeness of this young lady to your ladyship, which is a positive fact f jury—in her having been brought up by Miss Barbary—in Miss Barbary st Miss Summerson's real name to be Hawdon—in your ladyship's knowing these names *very well*—and in Hawdon's dying as he did—to give your lady a family interest in going further into the case, I will bring these papers here don't know what they are, except that they are old letters: I have never them in my possession yet. I will bring those papers here, as soon as I get th and go over them for the first time with your ladyship. I have told your l ship my object. I have told your ladyship that I should be placed in a disagreeable situation, if any complaint was made; and all is in strict confide

Is this the full purpose of the young man of the name of Guppy, or has he other? Do his words disclose the length, breadth, depth, of his object suspicion in coming here; or, if not, what do they hide? He is a match fo Lady there. She may look at him, but he can look at the table, and keep witness-box face of his from telling anything.

"You may bring the letters," says my Lady, "if you choose."

"Your Ladyship is not very encouraging, upon my word and honour," Mr. Guppy, a little injured.

"You may bring the letters," she repeats, in the same tone, "if you please."

"It shall be done. I wish your ladyship good day."

On a table near her is a rich bauble of a casket, barred and clasped like a strong chest. She, looking at him still, takes it to her and unlocks it.

"Oh! I assure your ladyship I am not actuated by any motives of that s says Mr. Guppy; "and I couldn't accept anything of the kind. I wish ladyship good day, and am much obliged to you all the same."

So the young man makes his bow, and goes down-stairs; where the s cilious Mercury does not consider himself called upon to leave his Olympus b hall-fire, to let the young man out.

As Sir Leicester basks in his library, and dozes over his newspaper, is the influence in the house to startle him; not to say, to make the very tre Chesney Wold fling up their knotted arms, the very portaits frown, the armour stir?

No. Words, sobs, and cries, are but air; and air is so shut in and shu

ghout the house in town, that sounds need be uttered trumpet-tongued
by my Lady in her chamber, to carry any faint vibration to Sir Leicester's
and yet this cry is in the house, going upward from a wild figure on its

my child, my child! Not dead in the first hours of her life, as my cruel
told me; but sternly nurtured by her, after she had renounced me and my
O my child, O my child!"

CHAPTER XXX.

ESTHER'S NARRATIVE.

ARD had been gone away some time, when a visitor came to pass a few
with us. It was an elderly lady. It was Mrs. Woodcourt, who, having
from Wales to stay with Mrs. Bayham Badger, and having written to my
ian, "by her son Allan's desire," to report that she had heard from him and
e was well, "and sent his kind remembrances to all of us," had been invited
guardian to make a visit to Bleak House. She stayed with us nearly three
. She took very kindly to me, and was extremely confidential: so much so
metimes she almost made me uncomfortable. I had no right, I knew very
to be uncomfortable because she confided in me, and I felt it was unreason-
still, with all I could do, I could not quite help it.

was such a sharp little lady, and used to sit with her hands folded in each
looking so very watchful while she talked to me, that perhaps I found that
irksome. Or perhaps it was her being so upright and trim; though I
think it was that, because I thought that quaintly pleasant. Nor can it
been the general expression of her face, which was very sparkling and
for an old lady. I don't know what it was. Or at least if I do, now, I
ht I did not then. Or at least—but it don't matter.

a night when I was going up-stairs to bed, she would invite me into her
where she sat before the fire in a great chair; and, dear me, she would tell
bout Morgan ap Kerrig until I was quite low-spirited! Sometimes she
d a few verses from Crumlinwallinwer and the Mewlinwillinwodd (if those are
ght names, which I dare say they are not), and would become quite fiery
the sentiments they expressed. Though I never knew what they were
in Welsh), further than that they were highly eulogistic of the lineage of
n ap Kerrig.

, Miss Summerson," she would say to me with stately triumph, "this you
the fortune inherited by my son. Wherever my son goes, he can claim
d with Ap Kerrig. He may not have money, but he always has what is
better—family, my dear."

d my doubts of their caring so very much for Morgan ap Kerrig, in India
hina; but of course I never expressed them. I used to say it was a great
to be so highly connected.

, my dear, a great thing," Mrs. Woodcourt would reply. "It has its
antages; my son's choice of a wife, for instance, is limited by it; but the
monial choice of the Royal family is limited, in much the same manner."

n she would pat me on the arm and smooth my dress, as much as to assure
at she had a good opinion of me, the distance between us notwithstanding.

oor Mr. Woodcourt, my dear," she would say, and always with some

emotion, for with her lofty pedigree she had a very affectionate heart, "was descended from a great Highland family, the Mac Coorts of Mac Coort. He served his king and country as an officer in the Royal Highlanders, and he died on the field. My son is one of the last representatives of two old families. With the blessing of Heaven he will set them up again, and unite them with another old family."

It was in vain for me to try to change the subject, as I used to try—only for the sake of novelty—or perhaps because—but I need not be so particular. Mrs. Woodcourt never would let me change it.

"My dear," she s[illegible] e so much sense, and you look at the world in a quiet [illegible] your time of life, that it is a comfort to me to talk to you a[illegible] matters of mine. You don't know much of my son, my dear; b[illegible]gh of him, I dare say, to recollect him?"

"Yes, ma'am. I r[illegible]

"Yes, my dear. [illegible] you are a judge of character, and I should like t[illegible]e

"O, Mrs. [illegible] difficult."

"Why is it [illegible]ned. "I don't see it myself."

"To give an opinion, my dear. *That's* true."

I didn't mean that; because Mr. Woodcourt had been at our house a good deal altogether, and had become quite intimate with my guardian. I said so, and added that he seemed to be very clever in his profession—we thought—and that his kindness and gentleness to Miss Flite were above all praise.

"You do him justice!" said Mrs. Woodcourt, pressing my hand. "You define him exactly. Allan is a dear fellow, and in his profession faultless. I say it, though I am his mother. Still, I must confess he is not without faults, love."

"None of us are," said I.

"Ah! But his really are faults that he might correct, and ought to correct," returned the sharp old lady, sharply shaking her head. "I am so much attached to you, that I may confide in you, my dear, as a third party wholly disinterested, that he is fickleness itself."

I said, I should have thought it hardly possible that he could have been otherwise than constant to his profession, and zealous in the pursuit of it, judging from the reputation he had earned.

"You are right again, my dear;" the old lady retorted, "but I don't refer to his profession, look you."

"O!" said I.

"No," said she. "I refer, my dear, to his social conduct. He is always paying trivial attentions to young ladies, and always has been, ever since he was eighteen. Now, my dear, he has never really cared for any one of them, and has never meant in doing this to do any harm, or to express anything but politeness and good nature. Still, it's not right, you know; is it?"

"No," said I, as she seemed to wait for me.

"And it might lead to mistaken notions, you see, my dear."

I supposed it might.

"Therefore, I have told him, many times, that he really should be more careful, both in justice to himself and in justice to others. And he has always said, 'Mother, I will be; but you know me better than anybody else does, and you know I mean no harm—in short, mean nothing.' All of which is very true, my dear, but is no justification. However, as he is now gone so far away, and for an *indefinite time*, and as he will have good opportunities and introductions, we may

er this past and gone. And you, my dear," said the old lady, who was now
ds and smiles; "regarding your dear self, my love?"
le, Mrs. Woodcourt?"
ot to be always selfish, talking of my son, who has gone to seek his fortune,
find a wife—when do you mean to seek *your* fortune and to find a husband,
Summerson? Hey, look you! Now you blush!"
n't think I did blush—at all events, it was not important if I did—and I
ay present fortune perfectly contented me, and I had no wish to change it.
hall I tell you what I always think of you, and the fortune yet to come for
ay love?" said Mrs. Woodcourt.
you believe you are a good prophet," said I.
Why, then, it is that you will marry some one, very rich and very worthy,
older—five-and-twenty years, perhaps—than yourself. And you will be an
ent wife, and much beloved, and very happy."
hat is a good fortune," said I. "But why is it to be mine?"
ly dear," she returned, "there's suitability in it—you are so busy, and so neat,
peculiarly situated altogether, that there's suitability in it, and it will come
s. And nobody, my love, will congratulate you more sincerely on such a
ge than I shall."
as curious that this should make me uncomfortable, but I think it did. I
it did. It made me for some part of that night uncomfortable. I was so
ed of my folly, that I did not like to confess it even to Ada; and that made
re uncomfortable still. I would have given anything not to have been so
in the bright old lady's confidence, if I could have possibly declined it. It
ne the most inconsistent opinions of her. At one time I thought she was
-teller, and at another time that she was the pink of truth. Now, I sus-
that she was very cunning; next moment, I believed her honest Welsh
o be perfectly innocent and simple. And, after all, what did it matter to
d why did it matter to me? Why could not I, going up to bed with my
of keys, stop to sit down by her fire, and accommodate myself for a little
to her, at least as well as to anybody else; and not trouble myself about the
ese things she said to me? Impelled towards her, as I certainly was, for I
ery anxious that she should like me, and was very glad indeed that she did,
hould I harp afterwards, with actual distress and pain, on every word she
nd weigh it over and over again in twenty scales? Why was it so worrying
to have her in our house, and confidential to me every night, when I yet
at it was better and safer, somehow, that she should be there than anywhere
These were perplexities and contradictions that I could not account for.
st, if I could—but I shall come to all that by-and-by, and it is mere idleness
on about it now.
when Mrs. Woodcourt went away, I was sorry to lose her, but was re-
too. And then Caddy Jellyby came down; and Caddy brought such a
of domestic news, that it gave us abundant occupation.
t, Caddy declared (and would at first declare nothing else) that I was the
dviser that ever was known. This, my pet said, was no news at all; and
said, of course, was nonsense. Then Caddy told us that she was going to
ried in a month; and that if Ada and I would be her bridesmaids, she was
ppiest girl in the world. To be sure, this was news indeed; and I thought
er should have done talking about it, we had so much to say to Caddy, and
had so much to say to us.
emed that Caddy's unfortunate papa had got over his bankruptcy—"gone
gh the Gazette," was the expression Caddy used, as if it were a tunnel—with
neral clemency and commiseration of his creditors; and had got rid of his

affairs in some blessed manner, without succeeding in understanding them; and had given up everything he possessed (which was not worth much, I should think, to judge from the state of the furniture), and had satisfied every one concerned that he could do no more, poor man. So, he had been honourably dismissed to "the office," to begin the world again. What he did at the office, I never knew: Caddy said he was a "Custom-House and General Agent," and the only thing I ever understood about that business was, that when he wanted money more than usual he went to the Docks to look for it, and hardly ever found it.

As soon as her papa had tranquillised his mind by becoming this shorn lamb, and they had removed to a furnished lodging in Hatton Garden (where I found the children, when I afterwards went there, cutting the horsehair out of the seats of the chairs, and choking themselves with it), Caddy had brought about a meeting between him and old Mr. Turveydrop; and poor Mr. Jellyby, being very humble and meek, had deferred to Mr. Turveydrop's Deportment so submissively, that they had become excellent friends. By degrees, old Mr. Turveydrop, thus familiarised with the idea of his son's marriage, had worked up his parental feelings to the height of contemplating that event as being near at hand; and had given his gracious consent to the young couple commencing housekeeping at the Academy in Newman Street, when they would.

"And your papa, Caddy. What did he say?"

"O! poor Pa," said Caddy, "only cried, and said he hoped we might get on better than he and Ma had got on. He didn't say so before Prince, he only said so to me. And he said, 'My poor girl, you have not been very well taught how to make a home for your husband; but unless you mean with all your heart to strive to do it, you had better murder him than marry him—if you really love him.'"

"And how did you reassure him, Caddy?"

"Why, it was very distressing, you know, to see poor Pa so low, and hear him say such terrible things, and I couldn't help crying myself. But I told him that I *did* mean it with all my heart; and that I hoped our house would be a place for him to come and find some comfort in, of an evening; and that I hoped and thought I could be a better daughter to him there, than at home. Then I mentioned Peepy's coming to stay with me; and then Pa began to cry again, and said the children were Indians."

"Indians, Caddy?"

"Yes," said Caddy, "Wild Indians. And Pa said,"—(here she began to sob, poor girl, not at all like the happiest girl in the world)—"that he was sensible the best thing that could happen to them was, their being all Tomahawked together."

Ada suggested that it was comfortable to know that Mr. Jellyby did not mean these destructive sentiments.

"No, of course I know Pa wouldn't like his family to be weltering in their blood," said Caddy; "but he means that they are very unfortunate in being Ma's children, and that he is very unfortunate in being Ma's husband; and I am sure that's true, though it seems unnatural to say so."

I asked Caddy if Mrs. Jellyby knew that her wedding-day was fixed.

"O! you know what Ma is, Esther," she returned. "It's impossible to say whether she knows it or not. She has been told it often enough; and when she *is* told it, she only gives me a placid look, as if I was I don't know what—a steeple in the distance," said Caddy, with a sudden idea; "and then she shakes her head, and says 'O Caddy, Caddy, what a teaze you are!' and goes on with the Borrioboola letters."

"And about your wardrobe, Caddy?" said I. For she was under no restraint with us.

"*Well*, my dear Esther," she returned, drying her eyes, "I must do the best

rust to my dear Prince never to have an unkind remembrance of my
abbily to him. If the question concerned an outfit for Borrioboola,
now all about it, and would be quite excited. Being what it is, she
s nor cares."
s not at all deficient in natural affection for her mother, but mentioned
ts, as an undeniable fact: which I am afraid it was. We were sorry
dear girl, and found so much to admire in the good disposition which
under such discouragement, that we both at once (I mean Ada and I)
ittle scheme, that made her perfectly joyful. This was, her staying
hree weeks; my staying with her for one; and our all three contriv-
ing out, and repairing, and sewing, and saving, and doing the very
d think of, to make the most of her stock. My guardian being as
the idea as Caddy was, we took her home next day to arrange the
brought her out again in triumph, with her boxes, and all the pur-
could be squeezed out of a ten-pound note, which Mr. Jellyby had
Docks I suppose, but which he at all events gave her. What my
uld not have given her, if we had encouraged him, it would be diffi-
but we thought it right to compound for no more than her wedding-
nnet. He agreed to this compromise; and if Caddy had ever been
ite, she was happy when we sat down to work.
lansy enough with her needle, poor girl, and pricked her fingers as
had been used to ink them. She could not help reddening a little,
n: partly with the smart, and partly with vexation at being able to
: but she soon got over that, and began to improve rapidly. So,
y, she, and my darling, and my little maid Charley, and a milliner out
and I, sat hard at work, as pleasantly as possible.
ab ove this, Caddy was very anxious "to learn housekeeping," as
Now, Mercy upon us! the idea of her learning housekeeping of a
y vast experience was such a joke, that I laughed, and coloured up,
a comical confusion when she proposed it. However, I said, "Caddy,
u are very welcome to learn anything that you can learn of *me*, my
I showed her all my books and methods, and all my fidgety ways.
have supposed that I was showing her some wonderful inventions, by
them; and if you had seen her, whenever I jingled my housekeeping
and attend me, certainly you might have thought that there never
r impostor than I, with a blinder follower than Caddy Jellyby.
with working and housekeeping, and lessons to Charley, and back-
the evening with my guardian, and duets with Ada, the three weeks
away. Then I went home with Caddy, to see what could be done
Ada and Charley remained behind, to take care of my guardian.
ay I went home with Caddy, I mean to the furnished lodging in
len. We went to Newman Street two or three times where prepara-
progress too; a good many, I observed, for enhancing the comforts
Turveydrop, and a few for putting the newly married couple away
ne top of the house; but our great point was to make the furnished
nt for the wedding-breakfast, as to combine Mrs. Jellyby beforehand
ant sense of the occasion.
was the more difficult thing of the two, because Mrs. Jellyby and
ome boy occupied the front sitting-room (the back one was a mere
it was littered down with waste paper and Borrioboolan documents,
stable might be littered with straw. Mrs. Jellyby sat there all day,
ong coffee, dictating, and holding Borrioboolan interviews by ap-
The unwholesome *boy*, who seemed to me to be going into a

since I first knew her, and her hair looking like the mane of a dustman'

Thinking that the display of Caddy's wardrobe would be the best approaching the subject, I invited Mrs. Jellyby to come and look at it on Caddy's bed, in the evening after the unwholesome boy was gone.

"My dear Miss Summerson," said she, rising from her desk, with sweetness of temper, "these are really ridiculous preparations, the assisting them is a proof of your kindness. There is something so inc absurd to me, in the idea of Caddy being married! O Caddy, you silly puss!"

She came up-stairs with us notwithstanding, and looked at the clo customary far-off manner. They suggested one distinct idea to her; fo with her placid smile, and shaking her head, "My good Miss Summers the cost, this weak child might have been equipped for Africa!"

On our going down-stairs again, Mrs. Jellyby asked me whether th some business was really to take place next Wednesday? And on m yes, she said, "Will my room be required, my dear Miss Summerson? quite impossible that I can put my papers away."

I took the liberty of saying that the room would certainly be wanted I thought we must put the papers away somewhere. "Well, my dear M merson," said Mrs. Jellyby, "you know best, I dare say. But by oblig employ a boy, Caddy has embarrassed me to that extent, overwhelme with public business, that I don't know which way to turn. We have cation meeting, too, on Wednesday afternoon, and the inconvenien serious."

"It is not likely to occur again," said I, smiling. "Caddy will be m once, probably."

"That's true," Mrs. Jellyby replied, "that's true, my dear. I su must make the best of it!"

The next question was, how Mrs. Jellyby should be dressed on the oc thought it very curious to see her looking on serenely from her writing-ta Caddy and I discussed it; occasionally shaking her head at us with a half- ful smile, like a superior spirit who could just bear with our trifling.

The state in which her dresses were, and the extraordinary confusion she kept them, added not a little to our difficulty; but at length we devi thing not very unlike what a common-place mother might wear on such sion. The abstracted manner in which Mrs. Jellyby would deliver her having this attire tried on by the dressmaker, and the sweetness with w would then observe to me how sorry she was that I had not turned my to Africa, were consistent with the rest of her behaviour.

The lodging was rather confined as to space, but I fancied that if Mrs. *household* had been the only lodgers in Saint Paul's or Saint Peter's,

advantage they would have found in the size of the building would have been its affording a great deal of room to be dirty in. I believe that nothing belonging to the family, which it had been possible to break, was unbroken at the time of those preparations for Caddy's marriage; that nothing which it had been possible to spoil in any way, was unspoilt; and that no domestic object which was capable of collecting dirt, from a dear child's knee to the door-plate, was without as much dirt as could well accumulate upon it.

Poor Mr. Jellyby, who very seldom spoke, and almost always sat when he was at home with his head against the wall, became interested when he saw that Caddy and I were attempting to establish some order among all this waste and ruin, and took off his coat to help. But such wonderful things came tumbling out of the closets when they were opened—bits of mouldy pie, sour bottles, Mrs. Jellyby's caps, letters, tea, forks, odd boots and shoes of children, firewood, wafers, saucepan-lids, damp sugar in odds and ends of paper bags, footstools, blacklead brushes, bread, Mrs. Jellyby's bonnets, books with butter sticking to the binding, guttered candle-ends put out by being turned upside down in broken candlesticks, nut-shells, heads and tails of shrimps, dinner-mats, gloves, coffee-grounds, umbrellas—that he looked frightened, as I left off again. But he came regularly every evening, and sat without his coat, with his head against the wall; as though he would have helped us, if he had known how.

"Poor Pa!" said Caddy to me, on the night before the great day, when we really had got things a little to rights. "It seems unkind to leave him, Esther. But what could I do, if I stayed? Since I first knew you, I have tidied and tidied over and over again; but it's useless. Ma and Africa, together, upset the whole house directly. We never have a servant who don't drink. Ma's ruinous to everything."

Mr. Jellyby could not hear what she said, but he seemed very low indeed, and shed tears, I thought.

"My heart aches for him: that it does!" sobbed Caddy. "I can't help thinking, to-night, Esther, how dearly I hope to be happy with Prince, and how dearly Pa hoped, I dare say, to be happy with Ma. What a disappointed life!"

"My dear Caddy!" said Mr. Jellyby, looking slowly round from the wall. It was the first time, I think, I ever heard him say three words together.

"Yes, Pa!" cried Caddy, going to him and embracing him affectionately.

"My dear Caddy," said Mr. Jellyby. "Never have ——"

"Not Prince, Pa?" faltered Caddy. "Not have Prince?"

"Yes, my dear," said Mr. Jellyby. "Have him, certainly. But, never have——"

I mentioned, in my account of our first visit to Thavies Inn, that Richard described Mr. Jellyby as frequently opening his mouth after dinner without saying anything. It was a habit of his. He opened his mouth now, a great many times, and shook his head in a melancholy manner.

"What do you wish me not to have? Don't have what, dear Pa?" asked Caddy, coaxing him, with her arms round his neck.

"Never have a Mission, my dear child."

Mr. Jellyby groaned, and laid his head against the wall again; and this was the only time I ever heard him make any approach to expressing his sentiments on the Borrioboolan question. I suppose he had been more talkative and lively, once: but he seemed to have been completely exhausted long before I knew him.

I thought Mrs. Jellyby never would have left off seriously looking over her papers, and drinking coffee, that night. It was twelve o'clock before we could obtain possession of the room; and the clearance it required then, was discouraging. Caddy, who was almost tired out, sat down in the middle of the floor, and cried. But she soon cheered up, and we did wonders with it before we went to bed.

In the morning it looked, by the aid of a few flowers and a quantity of
and water, and a little arrangement, quite gay. The plain breakfast made a ch
ful show, and Caddy was perfectly charming. But when my darling ca
thought—and I think now—that I never had seen such a dear face as my be
ful pet's.

We made a little feast for the children up-stairs, and we put Peepy at the
of the table, and we showed them Caddy in her bridal dress, and they cla
their hands and hurrahed, and Caddy cried to think that she was going away
them, and hugged them over and over again, until we brought Prince up to
her away—when, I am sorry to say, Peepy bit him. Then there was old
Turveydrop down-stairs, in a state of [illegible]ortment not to be expressed, beni
blessing Caddy, and giving my gua[illegible]o understand, that his son's happ
was his own parental work, and tha[illegible]rificed personal considerations to e
it. "My dear sir," said Mr. Turveyd[illegible]" these young people will live with
my house is large enough for their [illegible]modation, and they shall not want
shelter of my roof. I could have w[illegible]-you will understand the allusion,
Jarndyce, for you remember my ill[illegible]s patron the Prince Regent—I c
have wished that my son had marrie[illegible]a family where there was more De
ment; but the will of Heaven be don[illegible]

Mr. and Mrs. Pardiggle were of the party—Mr. Pardiggle, an obstinate-l
ing man with a large waistcoat and stubbly hair, who was always talking in a
bass voice about his mite, or Mrs. Pardiggle's mite, or their five boys' mites.
Quale, with his hair brushed back as usual, and his knobs of temples shining
much, was also there; not in the character of a disappointed lover, but as
Accepted of a young—at least, an unmarried—lady, a Miss Wisk, who was
there. Miss Wisk's mission, my guardian said, was to show the world
woman's mission was man's mission; and that the only genuine mission, of l
man and woman, was to be always moving declaratory resolutions about thing
general at public meetings. The guests were few; but were, as one might ex
at Mrs. Jellyby's, all devoted to public objects only. Besides those I have m
tioned, there was an extremely dirty lady, with her bonnet all awry, and
ticketed price of her dress still sticking on it, whose neglected home, Caddy
me, was like a filthy wilderness, but whose church was like a fancy fair. A
contentious gentleman, who said it was his mission to be everybody's brother,
who appeared to be on terms of coolness with the whole of his large family, c
pleted the party.

A party, having less in common with such an occasion, could hardly have b
got together by any ingenuity. Such a mean mission as the domestic missi
was the very last thing to be endured among them; indeed, Miss Wisk inform
us, with great indignation, before we sat down to breakfast, that the idea
woman's mission lying chiefly in the narrow sphere of Home was an outrage
slander on the part of her Tyrant, Man. One other singularity was, that nob
with a mission—except Mr. Quale, whose mission, as I think I have formerly s
was to be in ecstasies with everybody's mission—cared at all for anybody's miss
Mrs. Pardiggle being as clear that the only one infallible course was her coun
pouncing upon the poor, and applying benevolence to them like a strait-waistco
as Miss Wisk was that the only practical thing for the world was the emancipa
of Woman from the thraldom of her Tyrant, Man. Mrs. Jellyby, all the wh
sat smiling at the limited vision that could see anything but Borrioboola-Gha.

But I am anticipating now the purport of our conversation on the ride ho
instead of first marrying Caddy. We all went to church, and Mr. Jellyby g
her away. Of the air with which old Mr. Turveydrop, with his hat under his
arm, (the inside presented at the clergyman like a cannon,) and his eyes cast

themselves up into his wig, stood, stiff and high-shouldered, behind us bridesmaids during the ceremony, and afterwards saluted us, I could never say enough to do it justice. Miss Wisk, whom I cannot report as prepossessing in appearance, and whose manner was grim, listened to the proceedings, as part of Woman's wrongs, with a disdainful face. Mrs. Jellyby, with her calm smile and her bright eyes, looked the least concerned of all the company.

We duly came back to breakfast, and Mrs. Jellyby sat at the head of the table, and Mr. Jellyby at the foot. Caddy had previously stolen up-stairs, to hug the children again, and tell them that her name was Turveydrop. But this piece of information, instead of being an agreeable surprise to Peepy, threw him on his back in such transports of kicking grief, that I could do nothing on being sent for, but accede to the proposal that he should be admitted to the breakfast table. So he came down, and sat in my lap; and Mrs. Jellyby, after saying, in reference to the state of his pinafore, "O you naughty Peepy, what a shocking little pig you are!" was not at all discomposed. He was very good, except that he brought down Noah with him (out of an ark I had given him before we went to church), and *would* dip him head first into the wine-glasses, and then put him in his mouth.

My guardian, with his sweet temper and his quick perception and his amiable face, made something agreeable even out of the ungenial company. None of them seemed able to talk about anything but his, or her, own one subject, and none of them seemed able to talk about even that, as part of a world in which there was anything else; but my guardian turned it all to the merry encouragement of Caddy, and the honour of the occasion, and brought us through the breakfast nobly. What we should have done without him, I am afraid to think; for, all the company despising the bride and bridegroom, and old Mr. Turveydrop—and old Mr. Turveydrop, in virtue of his Deportment, considering himself vastly superior to all the company—it was a very unpromising case.

At last the time came when poor Caddy was to go, and when all her property was packed on the hired coach and pair that was to take her and her husband to Gravesend. It affected us to see Caddy clinging, then, to her deplorable home, and hanging on her mother's neck with the greatest tenderness.

"I am very sorry I couldn't go on writing from dictation, Ma," sobbed Caddy. "I hope you forgive me now?"

"O Caddy, Caddy!" said Mrs. Jellyby, "I have told you over and over again that I have engaged a boy, and there's an end of it."

"You are sure you are not the least angry with me, Ma? Say you are sure before I go away, Ma?"

"You foolish Caddy," returned Mrs. Jellyby, "do I look angry, or have I inclination to be angry, or time to be angry? How *can* you?"

"Take a little care of Pa while I am gone, ma'am!"

Mrs. Jellyby positively laughed at the fancy. "You romantic child," said she, lightly patting Caddy's back. "Go along. I am excellent friends with you. Now, good-bye, Caddy, and be very happy!"

Then Caddy hung upon her father, and raised his cheek against hers as if he were some poor dull child in pain. All this took place in the hall. Her father released her, took out his pocket-handkerchief, and sat down on the stairs with his head against the wall. I hope he found some consolation in wills. I almost think he did.

And then Prince took her arm in his, and bowed with great condescension and respect to his father, whose Deportment at that moment was overwhelming.

"Thank you over and over again, father!" said Prince, kissing his hand. "I am very grateful for all your kindness and consideration regarding our marriage, and so, I can assure you, is Caddy."

"Very," sobbed Caddy. "Ve-ry!"

"My dear son," said Mr. Turveydrop, "and dear daughter, I have done duty. If the spirit of a sainted Wooman hovers above us, and looks down on occasion, that, and your constant affection, will be my recompense. You will fail in *your* duty, my son and daughter, I believe?"

"Dear father, never!" cried Prince.

"Never, never, dear Mr. Turveydrop!" said Caddy.

"This," returned Mr. Turveydrop, "is as it should be. My children, my h is yours, my heart is yours, my all is yours. I will never leave you; nothing Death shall part us. My dear son, you mplate an absence of a week, I think

"A week, dear father. We shall home this day week."

"My dear child," said Mr. Turve "let me, even under the present ceptional circumstances, recommend punctuality. It is highly importa keep the connexion together; and s , if at all neglected, are apt to offence."

"This day week, father, we shall to be home to dinner."

"Good!" said Mr. Turveydrop. will find fires, my dear Caroline your own room, and dinner prepared apartment. Yes, yes, Prince!" cipating some self-denying objection on his on's part with a great air. "You our Caroline will be strange in the upper part of the premises, and will, therefo dine that day in my apartment. Now, bless ye!"

They drove away; and whether I wondered most at Mrs. Jellyby, or at Turveydrop, I did not know. Ada and my guardian were in the same condi when we came to talk it over. But before we drove away, too, I received a n unexpected and eloquent compliment from Mr. Jellyby. He came up to me in hall, took both my hands, pressed them earnestly, and opened his mouth to I was so sure of his meaning, that I said, quite flurried, "You are very welco sir. Pray don't mention it!"

"I hope this marriage is for the best, Guardian?" said I, when we three w on our road home.

"I hope it is, little woman. Patience. We shall see."

"Is the wind in the East to-day?" I ventured to ask him.

He laughed heartily, and answered "No."

"But it must have been this morning, I think," said I.

He answered, "No," again; and this time my dear girl confidently answe "No," too, and shook the lovely head which, with its blooming flowers and the golden hair, was like the very Spring. 'Much *you* know of East winds, ugly darling," said I, kissing her in my admiration—I couldn't help it.

Well! It was only their love for me, I know very well, and it is a long ti ago. I must write it, even if I rub it out again, because it gives me so m pleasure. They said there could be no East wind where Somebody was; th said that wherever Dame Durden went, there was sunshine and summer air.

CHAPTER XXXI.

NURSE AND PATIENT.

I HAD not been at home again many days, when one evening I went upst into my own room to take a peep over Charley's shoulder, and see how she w getting on with her copy-book. Writing was a trying business to Charley, w *seemed to* have no natural power over a pen, but in whose hand every l

appeared to become perversely animated, and to go wrong and crooked, and to stop, and splash, and sidle into corners, like a saddle donkey. It was very odd, to see what old letters Charley's young hand had made; they, so wrinkled, and shrivelled, and tottering; it, so plump and round. Yet Charley was uncommonly expert at other things, and had as nimble little fingers as I ever watched.

"Well, Charley," said I, looking over a copy of the letter O in which it was represented as square, triangular, pear-shaped, and collapsed in all kinds of ways, "we are improving. If we only get to make it round, we shall be perfect, Charley."

Then I made one, and Charley made one, and the pen wouldn't join Charley's neatly, but twisted it up into a knot.

"Never mind, Charley. We shall do it in time."

Charley laid down her pen, the copy being finished; opened and shut her cramped little hand; looked gravely at the page, half in pride and half in doubt; and got up, and dropped me a curtsey.

"Thank you, miss. If you please, miss, did you know a poor person of the name of Jenny?"

"A brickmaker's wife, Charley? Yes."

"She came and spoke to me when I was out a little while ago, and said you knew her, miss. She asked me if I wasn't the young lady's little maid—meaning you for the young lady, miss—and I said yes, miss."

"I thought she had left this neighbourhood altogether, Charley."

"So she had, miss, but she's come back again to where she used to live—she and Liz. Did you know another poor person of the name of Liz, miss?"

"I think I do, Charley, though not by name."

"That's what she said!" returned Charley. "They have both come back, miss, and have been tramping high and low."

"Tramping high and low, have they, Charley?"

"Yes, miss." If Charley could only have made the letters in her copy as round as the eyes with which she looked into my face, they would have been excellent. "And this poor person came about the house three or four days, hoping to get a glimpse of you, miss—all she wanted, she said—but you were away. That was when she saw me. She saw me a-going about, miss," said Charley, with a short laugh of the greatest delight and pride, "and she thought I looked like your maid!"

"Did she though, really, Charley?"

"Yes, miss!" said Charley, "really and truly." And Charley, with another short laugh of the purest glee, made her eyes very round again, and looked as serious as became my maid. I was never tired of seeing Charley in the full enjoyment of that great dignity, standing before me with her youthful face and figure, and her steady manner, and her childish exultation breaking through it now and then in the pleasantest way.

"And where did you see her, Charley?" said I.

My little maid's countenance fell, as she replied, "By the doctor's shop, miss." For Charley wore her black frock yet.

I asked if the brickmaker's wife was ill, but Charley said No. It was some one else. Some one in her cottage who had tramped down to Saint Albans, and was tramping he didn't know where. A poor boy, Charley said. No father, no mother, no any one. "Like as Tom might have been, miss, if Emma and me had died after father," said Charley, her round eyes filling with tears.

"And she was getting medicine for him, Charley?"

"She said, miss," returned Charley, "how that he had once done as much for her."

My little maid's face was so eager, and her quiet hands were folded so clos in one another as she stood looking at me, that I had no great difficulty in readi her thoughts. "Well, Charley," said I, "it appears to me that you and I can no better than go round to Jenny's and see what's the matter."

The alacrity with which Charley brought my bonnet and veil, and, havi dressed me, quaintly pinned herself into her warm shawl and made herself lo like a little old woman, sufficiently expressed her readiness. So Charley and without saying anything to any one, went out.

It was a cold, wild night, and the trees shuddered in the wind. The rain ha been thick and heavy all day, and with little intermission for many days. No was falling just then, however. The sky had partly cleared, but was very gloom —even above us, where a few stars were shining. In the north and north-we where the sun had set three hours before, there was a pale dead light both bea tiful and awful; and into it long sullen lines of cloud waved up, like a sea strick immovable as it was heaving. Towards London, a lurid glare overhung th whole dark waste; and the contrast between these two lights, and the tim which the redder light engendered of an unearthly fire, gleaming on all the unco buildings of the city, and on all the faces of its many thousands of wonderin inhabitants, was as solemn as might be.

I had no thought, that night—none, I am quite sure—of what was soon kappen to me. But I have always remembered since, that when we had stopp at the garden-gate to look up at the sky, and when we went upon our way, I h for a moment an undefinable impression of myself as being something differ from what I then was. I know it was then, and there, that I had it. I have ev since connected the feeling with that spot and time, and with everything as ciated with that spot and time, to the distant voices in the town, the barking of dog, and the sound of wheels coming down the miry hill.

It was Saturday night; and most of the people belonging to the place wh we were going, were drinking elsewhere. We found it quieter than I had pr viously seen it, though quite as miserable. The kilns were burning, and a stiff vapour set towards us with a pale blue glare.

We came to the cottage, where there was a feeble candle in the patched w dow. We tapped at the door, and went in. The mother of the little child w had died, was sitting in a chair on one side of the poor fire by the bed; a opposite to her, a wretched boy, supported by the chimney-piece, was cowri on the floor. He held under his arm like a little bundle, a fragment of a fur ca and as he tried to warm himself, he shook until the crazy door and wind shook. The place was closer than before, and had an unhealthy, and a very pe liar smell.

I had not lifted my veil when I first spoke to the woman, which was at moment of our going in. The boy staggered up instantly, and stared at me w a remarkable expression of surprise and terror.

His action was so quick, and my being the cause of it was so evident, tha stood still, instead of advancing nearer.

"I won't go no more to the berryin ground," muttered the boy; "I ain't going there, so I tell you!"

I lifted my veil and spoke to the woman. She said to me in a low vo "Don't mind him, ma'am. He'll soon come back to his head;" and said to h "Jo, Jo, what's the matter?"

"I know wot she's come for!" cried the boy.

"Who?"

"The lady there. She's come to get me to go along with her to the ber ground. I won't go to the berryin ground. I don't like the name on it.

a-berryin *me*." His shivering came on again, and as he leaned against
ıe shook the hovel.
ıs been talking off and on about such like, all day, ma'am," said Jenny,
Why, how you stare! This is *my* lady, Jo."
" returned the boy, doubtfully, and surveying me with his arm held out
burning eyes. "She looks to me the t'other one. It ain't the bonnet,
ain't the gownd, but she looks to me the t'other one."
e Charley, with her premature experience of illness and trouble, had
her bonnet and shawl, and now went quietly up to him with a chair,
im down in it like an old sick nurse. Except that no such attendant
e shown him Charley's youthful face, which seemed to engage his
.
" said the boy. "*You* tell me. Ain't the lady the t'other lady?"
shook her head, as she methodically drew his rags about him and made
m as she could.
he boy muttered. "Then I 'spose she ain't."
e to see if I could do you any good," said I. "What is the matter
"
being froze," returned the boy, hoarsely, with his haggard gaze wan-
ıut me, "and then burnt up, and then froze, and then burnt up, ever
mes in a hour. And my head 's all sleepy, and all a-going mad-like
so dry—and my bones isn't half so much bones as pain."
did he come here?" I asked the woman.
ıorning, ma'am, I found him at the corner of the town. I had known
London yonder. Hadn't I, Jo?"
ll-Alone's," the boy replied.
er he fixed his attention or his eyes, it was only for a very little while.
egan to droop his head again, and roll it heavily, and speak as if he were
.
did he come from London?" I asked.
e from London yes'day," said the boy himself, now flushed and hot.
ing somewheres."
e is he going?" I asked.
wheres," repeated the boy, in a louder tone. "I have been moved on,
l on, more nor ever I was afore, since the t'other one giv' me the sov'ring.
sby, she 's always a-watching, and a-driving of me—what have I done
ınd they're all a-watching and a-driving of me. Every one of 'em's
t, from the time when I don't get up, to the time when I don't go to
l I'm a-going somewheres. That's where I'm a-going. She told me,
om-all-Alone's, as she came from Stolbuns, and so I took the Stolbuns
's as good as another."
ys concluded by addressing Charley.
is to be done with him?" said I, taking the woman aside. "He could
in this state, even if he had a purpose, and knew where he was going!"
w no more, ma'am, than the dead," she replied, glancing compassion-
m. "Perhaps the dead know better, if they could only tell us. I've
ere all day for pity's sake, and I've given him broth and physic, and
ne to try if any one will take him in (here's my pretty in the bed—her
I call it mine); but I can't keep him long, for if my husband was to
e and find him here, he'd be rough in putting him out, and might do
t. Hark! Here comes Liz back!"
er woman came hurriedly in as she spoke, and the boy got up with a
ıred sense that he was expected to be going. When the little child

he frequently did without notice, and never bringing any clothes with him, but always borrowing everything he wanted.

They came out with me directly, to look at the boy. The servants had gathered in the hall, too; and he shivered in the window-seat with Charley standing by him, like some wounded animal that had been found in a ditch.

"This is a sorrowful case," said my guardian, after asking him a question or two, and touching him, and examining his eyes. "What do you say, Harold?"

"You had better turn him out," said Mr. Skimpole.

"What do you mean?" inquired my guardian, almost sternly.

"My dear Jarndyce," said Mr. Skimpole, "you know what I am: I am a child. Be cross to me, if I deserve it. But I have a constitutional objection to this sort of thing. I always had, when I was a medical man. He's not safe, you know. There's a very bad sort of fever about him."

Mr. Skimpole had retreated from the hall to the drawing-room again, and said this in his airy way, seated on the music-stool as we stood by.

"You'll say it's childish," observed Mr. Skimpole, looking gaily at us. "Well, I dare say it may be; but I *am* a child, and I never pretend to be anything else. If you put him out in the road, you only put him where he was before. He will be no worse off than he was, you know. Even make him better off, if you like. Give him sixpence, or five shillings, or five pound ten—you are arithmeticians, and I am not—and get rid of him!"

"And what is he to do then?" asked my guardian.

"Upon my life," said Mr. Skimpole, shrugging his shoulders with his engaging smile, "I have not the least idea what he is to do then. But I have no doubt he'll do it."

"Now, is it not a horrible reflection," said my guardian, to whom I had hastily explained the unavailing efforts of the two women, "is it not a horrible reflection," walking up and down and rumpling his hair, "that if this wretched creature were a convicted prisoner, his hospital would be wide open to him, and he would be as well taken care of as any sick boy in the kingdom."

"My dear Jarndyce," returned Mr. Skimpole, "you'll pardon the simplicity of the question, coming as it does from a creature who is perfectly simple in worldly matters— but, why *isn't* he a prisoner then?"

My guardian stopped and looked at him with a whimsical mixture of amusement and indignation in his face.

"Our young friend is not to be suspected of any delicacy, I should imagine," said Mr. Skimpole, unabashed and candid. "It seems to me that it would be wiser, as well as in a certain kind of way more respectable, if he showed some misdirected energy that got him into prison. There would be more of an adventurous spirit in it, and consequently more of a certain sort of poetry."

"I believe," returned my guardian, resuming his uneasy walk, "that there is not such another child on earth as yourself."

"Do you really?" said Mr. Skimpole; "I dare say! But, I confess I don't see why our young friend, in his degree, should not seek to invest himself with such poetry as is open to him. He is no doubt born with an appetite—probably, when he is in a safer state of health, he has an excellent appetite. Very well. At our young friend's natural dinner hour, most probably about noon, our young friend says in effect to society, 'I am hungry; will you have the goodness to produce your spoon, and feed me?' Society, which has taken upon itself the general arrangement of the whole system, and professes to have a spoon for our young friend, does *not* produce that spoon: and our young friend, therefore, says 'You really must excuse me if I starve it.' Now, this appears to me a case of misdirected energy, which has a certain amount of reason in it, and

ensure his admission into the proper place by merely going there
though it's a bad state of things when, in his condition, that is ne
it's growing late, and is a very bad night, and the boy is worn
There is a bed in the wholesome loft-room by the stable; we ha
him there till morning, when he can be wrapped up and removed
that."

"O!" said Mr. Skimpole, with his hands upon the keys of the
moved away. "Are you going back to our young friend?"

"Yes," said my guardian.

"How I envy you your constitution, Jarndyce!" returned Mr. Sk
playful admiration. "You don't mind these things, neither does M
son. You are ready at all times to go anywhere, and do anythi
Will! I have no Will at all—and no Won't—simply Can't."

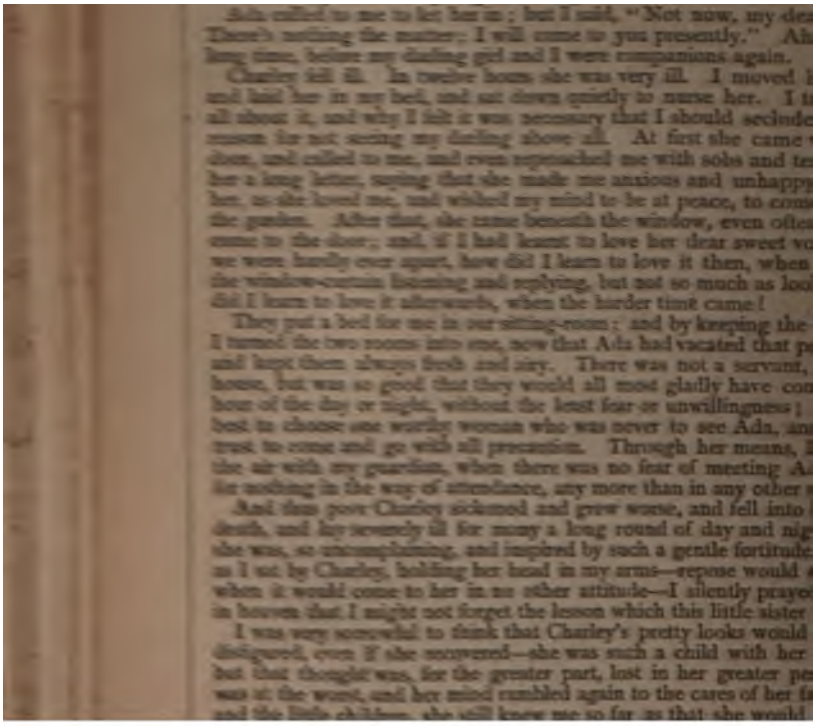
"You can't recommend anything for the boy, I suppose?" said
looking back over his shoulder, half angrily; only half angrily,
seemed to consider Mr. Skimpole an accountable being.

"My dear Jarndyce, I observed a bottle of cooling medicine in hi
it's impossible for him to do better than take it. You can tell them
little vinegar about the place where he sleeps, and to keep it mo
and him moderately warm. But it is mere impertinence in me
recommendation. Miss Summerson has such a knowledge of detai
capacity for the administration of detail, that she knows all about it."

"We went back into the hall, and explained to Jo what we pr
which Charley explained to him again, and which he received with
unconcern I had already noticed, wearily looking on at what was
were for somebody else. The servants compassionating his miserab
being very anxious to help, we soon got the loft-room ready; and
men about the house carried him across the wet yard, well wrapped
pleasant to observe how kind they were to him, and how there app
general impression among them that frequently calling him "Old
likely to revive his spirits. Charley directed the operations, and wen
between the loft-room and the house with such little stimulants an
we thought it safe to give him. My guardian himself saw him befo
for the night, and reported to me, when he returned to the Growle

"Thrown on the wide world, doom'd to wander and roam,
Bereft of his parents, bereft of a home."

exquisitely. It was a song that always made him cry, he told us.
was extremely gay all the rest of the evening: "for he absolutely chirped,"
were his delighted words; "when he thought by what a happy talent for
s he was surrounded." He gave us, in his glass of negus, "Better health
young friend!" and supposed, and gaily pursued, the case of his being
d like Whittington to become Lord Mayor of London. In that event, no
he would establish the Jarndyce Institution and the Summerson Alms-
, and a little annual Corporation Pilgrimage to St. Albans. He had no
he said, that our young friend was an excellent boy in his way, but his way
t the Harold Skimpole way; what Harold Skimpole was, Harold Skimpole
und himself, to his considerable surprise, when he first made his own
stance; he had accepted himself with all his failings, and had thought it
philosophy to make the best of the bargain; and he hoped we would do
ne.
dey's last report was, that the boy was quiet. I could see, from my window,
ntern they had left him burning quietly; and I went to bed very happy to
hat he was sheltered.
re was more movement and more talking than usual a little before day-
and it awoke me. As I was dressing, I looked out of my window, and
one of our men who had been among the active sympathisers last night,
r there was anything wrong about the house. The lantern was still burn-
the loft-window.
s the boy, miss," said he.
he worse?" I inquired.
ne, miss."
ad!"
ad, miss? No. Gone clean off."
hat time of the night he had gone, or how, or why, it seemed hopeless ever
re. The door remaining as it had been left, and the lantern standing in
dow, it could only be supposed that he had got out by a trap in the floor
communicated with an empty cart-house below. But he had shut it down
if that were so; and it looked as if it had not been raised. Nothing of any
as missing. On this fact being clearly ascertained, we all yielded to the
belief that delirium had come upon him in the night, and that, allured by
maginary object, or pursued by some imaginary horror, he had strayed away
worse than helpless state;—all of us, that is to say, but Mr. Skimpole, who
dly suggested, in his usual easy light style, that it had occurred to our
friend that he was not a safe inmate, having a bad kind of fever upon him;
t he had, with great natural politeness, taken himself off.
y possible inquiry was made, and every place was searched. The brick-
ere examined, the cottages were visited, the two women were particularly
med, but they knew nothing of him, and nobody could doubt that their
was genuine. The weather had for some time been too wet, and the
itself had been too wet, to admit of any tracing by footsteps. Hedge and
and wall, and rick and stack, were examined by our men for a long distance
lest the boy should be lying in such a place insensible or dead; but nothing
en to indicate that he had ever been near. From the time when he was
the loft-room, he vanished.
search continued for five days. I do not mean that it ceased, even then;
d my attention was then diverted into a current very memorable to me.
Charley was at her writing again in my room in the evening, and as I sat



Nurse and Patient

widow; of the ruler's daughter raised up by the gracious hand upon her bed of death. And Charley told me that when her father died, she had kneeled down and prayed in her first sorrow that he likewise might be raised up, and given back to his poor children; and that if she should never get better, and should die too, she thought it likely that it might come into Tom's mind to offer the same prayer for her. Then would I show Tom how these people of old days had been brought back to life on earth, only that we might know our hope to be restored to Heaven!

But of all the various times there were in Charley's illness, there was not one when she lost the gentle qualities I have spoken of. And there were many, many, when I thought in the night of the last high belief in the watching Angel, and the last higher trust in God, on the part of her poor despised father.

And Charley did not die. She flutteringly and slowly turned the dangerous point, after long lingering there, and then began to mend. The hope that never had been given, from the first, of Charley being in outward appearance Charley any more, soon began to be encouraged; and even that prospered, and I saw her growing into her old childish likeness again.

It was a great morning, when I could tell Ada all this as she stood out in the garden; and it was a great evening, when Charley and I at last took tea together in the next room. But, on that same evening, I felt that I was stricken old.

Happily for both of us, it was not until Charley was safe in bed again and placidly asleep, that I began to think the contagion of her illness was upon me. I had been able easily to hide what I felt at tea-time, but I was past that already now, and I knew that I was rapidly following in Charley's steps.

I was well enough, however, to be up early in the morning, and to return my darling's cheerful blessing from the garden, and to talk with her as long as usual. But I was not free from an impression that I had been walking about the two rooms in the night, a little beside myself, though knowing where I was: and I felt confused at times—with a curious sense of fulness, as if I were becoming too large altogether.

In the evening I was so much worse, that I resolved to prepare Charley; with which view, I said "You're getting quite strong, Charley, are you not?"

"Oquite!" said Charley.

"Strong enough to be told a secret, I think, Charley?"

"Quite strong enough for that, miss!" cried Charley. But Charley's face fell in the height of her delight, for she saw the secret in my face; and she came out of the great chair, and fell upon my bosom, and said "O miss, it's my doing! It's my doing!" and a great deal more, out of the fulness of her grateful heart.

"Now, Charley," said I, after letting her go on for a little while, "if I am to be ill, my great trust, humanly speaking, is in you. And unless you are as quiet and composed for me, as you always were for yourself, you can never fulfil it, Charley."

"If you'll let me cry a little longer, miss," said Charley. "O my dear, my dear! if you'll only let me cry a little longer, O my dear!"—how affectionately and devotedly she poured this out, as she clung to my neck, I never can remember without tears—"I'll be good."

So I let Charley cry a little longer, and it did us both good.

"Trust in me now, if you please, miss," said Charley, quietly. "I am listening to everything you say."

"It's very little at present, Charley. I shall tell your doctor to-night that I don't think I am well, and that you are going to nurse me."

For that the poor child thanked me with her whole heart.

"And in the morning, when you hear Miss Ada in the garden, if I should not

be quite able to go to the window-curtain as usual, do you go, Charley, an
I am asleep—that I have rather tired myself, and am asleep. At all times
the room as I have kept it, Charley, and let no one come."

Charley promised, and I lay down, for I was very heavy. I saw the doctor
night, and asked the favour of him that I wished to ask, relative to his s
nothing of my illness in the house as yet. I have a very indistinct remembr
of that night melting into day, and of day melting into night again; but I
just able, on the first morning, to get to the window, and speak to my darlin

On the second morning I heard her dear voice—O how dear now!—out
and I asked Charley, with some difficulty (speech being painful to me), to g
say I was asleep. I heard her answer softly, "Don't disturb her, Charley, fo
world!

"How does my own Pride look, Charley?" I inquired.

"Disappointed, miss," said Charley, peeping through the curtain.

"But I know she is very beautiful this morning."

"She is indeed, miss," answered Charley, peeping. "Still looking up a
window."

With her blue clear eyes, God bless them, always loveliest when raised
that!

I called Charley to me, and gave her her last charge.

"Now, Charley, when she knows I am ill, she will try to make her way
the room. Keep her out, Charley, if you love me truly, to the last! Cha
if you let her in but once, only to look upon me for one moment as I lie he
shall die."

"I never will! I never will!" she promised me.

"I believe it, my dear Charley. And now come and sit beside me for a
while, and touch me with your hand. For I cannot see you, Charley; I
blind."

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE APPOINTED TIME.

It is night in Lincoln's Inn—perplexed and troublous valley of the shadow o
law, where suitors generally find but little day—and fat candles are snuffed o
offices, and clerks have rattled down the crazy wooden stairs, and dispersed.
bell that rings at nine o'clock, has ceased its doleful clangour about nothing
gates are shut; and the night-porter, a solemn warder with a mighty pow
sleep, keeps guard in his lodge. From tiers of staircase windows, clogged h
like the eyes of Equity, bleared Argus with a fathomless pocket for every eye
an eye upon it, dimly blink at the stars. In dirty upper casements, here
there, hazy little patches of candlelight reveal where some wise draughtsman
conveyancer yet toils for the entanglement of real estate in meshes of sheep-
in the average ratio of about a dozen of sheep to an acre of land. Over w
bee-like industry, these benefactors of their species linger yet, though office-l
be past; that they may give, for every day, some good account at last.

In the neighbouring court, where the Lord Chancellor of the Rag and B
shop dwells, there is a general tendency towards beer and supper. Mrs. J
and Mrs. Perkins, whose respective sons, engaged with a circle of acquaint
in the game of hide and seek, have been lying in ambush about the by-way

Chancery Lane for some hours, and scouring the plain of the same thoroughfare to the confusion of passengers—Mrs. Piper and Mrs. Perkins have but now exchanged congratulations on the children being abed; and they still linger on a door-step over a few parting words. Mr. Krook and his lodger, and the fact of Mr. Krook's being "continually in liquor," and the testamentary prospects of the young man are, as usual, the staple of their conversation. But they have something to say, likewise, of the Harmonic Meeting at the Sol's Arms; where the sound of the piano through the partly-opened windows jingles out into the court, and where Little Swills, after keeping the lovers of harmony in a roar like a very Yorick, may now be heard taking the gruff line in a concerted piece, and sentimentally adjuring his friends and patrons to Listen, listen, listen, Tew the wa-ter-Fall! Mrs. Perkins and Mrs. Piper compare opinions on the subject of the young lady of professional celebrity who assists at the Harmonic Meetings, and who has a space to herself in the manuscript announcement in the window; Mrs. Perkins possessing information that she has been married a year and a half, though announced as Miss M. Melvilleson, the noted syren, and that her baby is clandestinely conveyed to the Sol's Arms every night to receive its natural nourishment during the entertainments. "Sooner than which, myself," says Mrs. Perkins, "I would get my living by selling lucifers." Mrs. Piper, as in duty bound, is of the same opinion; holding that a private station is better than public applause, and thanking Heaven for her own (and, by implication, Mrs. Perkins's) respectability. By this time, the potboy of the Sol's Arms appearing with her supper-pint well frothed, Mrs. Piper accepts that tankard and retires in-doors, first giving a fair good night to Mrs. Perkins, who has had her own pint in her hand ever since it was fetched from the same hostelry by young Perkins before he was sent to bed. Now, there is a sound of putting up shop-shutters in the court, and a smell as of the smoking of pipes; and shooting stars are seen in upper windows, further indicating retirement to rest. Now, too, the policeman begins to push at doors; to try fastenings; to be suspicious of bundles; and to administer his beat, on the hypothesis that every one is either robbing or being robbed.

It is a close night, though the damp cold is searching too; and there is a laggard mist a little way up in the air. It is a fine steaming night to turn the slaughter-houses, the unwholesome trades, the sewerage, bad water, and burial-grounds to account, and give the Registrar of Deaths some extra business. It may be something in the air—there is plenty in it—or it may be something in himself, that is in fault; but Mr. Weevle, otherwise Jobling, is very ill at ease. He comes and goes, between his own room and the open street door, twenty times an hour. He has been doing so, ever since it fell dark. Since the Chancellor shut up his shop, which he did very early to-night, Mr. Weevle has been down and up, and down and up (with a cheap tight velvet skull-cap on his head, making his whiskers look out of all proportion), oftener than before.

It is no phenomenon that Mr. Snagsby should be ill at ease too; for he always is so, more or less, under the oppressive influence of the secret that is upon him. Impelled by the mystery, of which he is a partaker, and yet in which he is not a sharer, Mr. Snagsby haunts what seems to be its fountain-head—the rag and bottle shop in the court. It has an irresistible attraction for him. Even now, coming round by the Sol's Arms with the intention of passing down the court, and out at the Chancery Lane end, and so terminating his unpremeditated after-supper stroll of ten minutes long from his own door and back again, Mr. Snagsby approaches.

"What, Mr. Weevle?" says the stationer, stopping to speak. "Are *you* there?"

"Ay!" says Weevle. "Here I am, Mr. Snagsby."

"Airing yourself, as I am doing, before you go to bed?" the stationer inquires.

... and wipes his mo...
... as if they were quite fre...

... of weather."
... says Mr. Snagsby, "and I thi...

... gives me the horrors," returns Mr. Wee...
... lonesome way, and in a lonesom...
... says Mr. Snagsby, looking in p...
... passage, and then falling back a step to l...
... room alone, as you do, sir. I should...
... sometimes, that I should be driven t...
... than sit there. But then it's very true t...
... That makes a difference."
... returns Tony.
... pursues Mr. Snagsby, coughing his...
... "Mr. Krook ought to consider it i...

... says Tony. "But I doubt it."
... do you, sir?" returns the stationer.
... don't know how it is exactly, but the law seem...
... says Mr. Snagsby, with his apologetic cough,
... the profession I get my living by."
... up and down the court, and then lo...
... catching his eye, looks upward for a...
... exactly seeing his way out of this...
... sir," he observes, slowly rubbing his ha...

... returns Mr. Weevle.
... says Mr. Snagsby, twitching his h...
... tapping his acquaintance on the...
... as if he were not over-fond...
... with him. . . . .

[redacted]

"Seems a Fate in it, don't there?" suggests the stationer.

"There does."

"Just so," observes the stationer, with his confirmatory cough. "Quite a Fate in it. Quite a Fate. Well, Mr. Weevle, I am afraid I must bid you good night;" Mr. Snagsby speaks as if it made him desolate to go, though he has been casting about for any means of escape ever since he stopped to speak; "my little woman will be looking for me else. Good night, sir!"

If Mr. Snagsby hastens home to save his little woman the trouble of looking for him, he might set his mind at rest on that score. His little woman has had her eye upon him round the Sol's Arms all this time, and now glides after him with a pocket handkerchief wrapped over her head; honouring Mr. Weevle and his doorway with a searching glance as she goes past.

"You'll know me again, ma'am, at all events," says Mr. Weevle to himself; "and I can't compliment you on your appearance, whoever you are, with your head tied up in a bundle. Is this fellow *never* coming!"

This fellow approaches as he speaks. Mr. Weevle softly holds up his finger, and draws him into the passage, and closes the street door. Then, they go up-stairs; Mr. Weevle heavily, and Mr. Guppy (for it is he) very lightly indeed. When they are shut into the back room, they speak low.

"I thought you had gone to Jericho at least, instead of coming here," says Tony.

"Why, I said about ten."

"You said about ten," Tony repeats. "Yes, so you did say about ten. But, according to my count, it's ten times ten—it's a hundred o'clock. I never had such a night in my life!"

"What has been the matter?"

"That's it!" says Tony. "Nothing has been the matter. But, here have I been stewing and fuming in this jolly old crib, till I have had the horrors falling on me as thick as hail. *There's* a blessed looking candle!" says Tony, pointing to the heavily burning taper on his table with a great cabbage head and a long winding-sheet.

"That's easily improved," Mr. Guppy observes, as he takes the snuffers in hand.

"*Is* it?" returns his friend. "Not so easily as you think. It has been smouldering like that, ever since it was lighted."

"Why, what's the matter with you, Tony?" inquires Mr. Guppy, looking at him, snuffers in hand, as he sits down with his elbow on the table.

"William Guppy," replies the other, "I am in the Downs. It's this unbearably dull, suicidal room—and old Boguey downstairs, I suppose." Mr. Weevle moodily pushes the snuffer-tray from him, leans his head on his hand, puts his feet on the fender, and looks at the fire. Mr. Guppy, observing him, slightly tosses his head and sits down on the other side of the table in an easy attitude.

"Wasn't that Snagsby talking to you, Tony?"

"Yes, and he—yes, it was Snagsby," says Mr. Weevle, altering the construction of his sentence.

"On business?"

"No. No business. He was only sauntering by and stopped to prattle."

"I thought it was Snagsby," says Mr. Guppy, "and thought it as well that he shouldn't see me, so I waited till he was gone."

"There we go again, William!" cries Tony, looking up for an instant. "So mysterious and secret! By George, if we were going to commit a murder we couldn't have more mystery about it!"

[illegible] into a mo[illegible]
[illegible] and remonst[illegible]

[illegible]
[illegible] in I [illegible]
[illegible] has an unrequi[illegible]
[illegible] these things when an u[illegible]
[illegible] Tony, that I don't [illegible]
[illegible] quite gentlemanly."
[illegible] returns Mr. Weevle.
[illegible] William [illegible] but I feel strong[illegible]

[illegible] and begs Mr. William [illegible]
[illegible] however, having got the [illegible]
[illegible] remonstrance.
[illegible] really ought to be c[illegible]
[illegible] has an unrequited image imprin[illegible]
[illegible] which vibrate to the [illegible]
[illegible] all that is calculated to char[illegible]
[illegible] perhaps, and I may w[illegible]
[illegible] hover around one flower.
[illegible] carry you through it. St[illegible]
[illegible] feelings without a cau[illegible]
[illegible] longer pursued, s[illegible]
[illegible] Mr. [illegible] acquiesces, with [illegible]
[illegible] accord."
[illegible] this same bundle [illegible]
[illegible] have appointed twelve o'cloc[illegible]

[illegible] don't know. Said, to-day was [illegible]
[illegible] clock. He'll have drun[illegible]
[illegible]

"At twelve. And, as I tell you, when you came it seemed to me a hundred."

"Tony," says Mr. Guppy, after considering a little with his legs crossed, "he can't read yet, can he?"

"Read! He'll never read. He can make all the letters separately, and he knows most of them separately when he sees them; he has got on that much, under me; but he can't put them together. He's too old to acquire the knack of it now—and too drunk."

"Tony," says Mr. Guppy, uncrossing and recrossing his legs; "how do you suppose he spelt out that name of Hawdon?"

"He never spelt it out. You know what a curious power of eye he has, and how he has been used to employ himself in copying things by eye alone. He imitated it—evidently from the direction of a letter; and asked me what it meant."

"Tony," says Mr. Guppy, uncrossing and recrossing his legs again; "should you say that the original was a man's writing or a woman's?"

"A woman's. Fifty to one a lady's—slopes a good deal, and the end of the letter 'n,' long and hasty."

Mr. Guppy has been biting his thumb-nail during this dialogue, generally changing the thumb when he has changed the cross leg. As he is going to do so again, he happens to look at his coat-sleeve. It takes his attention. He stares at it, aghast.

"Why, Tony, what on earth is going on in this house to-night? Is there a chimney on fire?"

"Chimney on fire!"

"Ah!" returns Mr. Guppy. "See how the soot's falling. See here, on my arm! See again, on the table here! Confound the stuff, it won't blow off—smears, like black fat!"

They look at one another, and Tony goes listening to the door, and a little way up-stairs, and a little way down-stairs. Comes back, and says it's all right, and all quiet; and quotes the remark he lately made to Mr. Snagsby, about their cooking chops at the Sol's Arms.

"And it was then," resumes Mr. Guppy, still glancing with remarkable aversion at the coat-sleeve, as they pursue their conversation before the fire, leaning on opposite sides of the table, with their heads very near together, "that he told you of his having taken the bundle of letters from his lodger's portmanteau?"

"That was the time, sir," answers Tony, faintly adjusting his whiskers. "Whereupon I wrote a line to my dear boy, the Honourable William Guppy, informing him of the appointment for to-night, and advising him not to call before: Boguey being a Slyboots."

The light vivacious tone of fashionable life which is usually assumed by Mr. Weevle, sits so ill upon him to-night, that he abandons that and his whiskers together; and, after looking over his shoulder, appears to yield himself up, a prey to the horrors again.

"You are to bring the letters to your room to read and compare, and to get yourself into a position to tell him all about them. That's the arrangement, isn't it, Tony?" asks Mr. Guppy, anxiously biting his thumb-nail.

"You can't speak too low. Yes. That's what he and I agreed."

"I tell you what, Tony——"

"You can't speak too low," says Tony once more. Mr. Guppy nods his sagacious head, advances it yet closer, and drops into a whisper.

"I tell you what. The first thing to be done is, to make another packet, like the real one; so that, if he should ask to see the real one while it's in my possession, you can show him the dummy."

"And suppose he detects the dummy as soon as he sees it—which with so

aises the sash, and they both rest on the window-sill, half in and half out oom. The neighbouring houses are too near, to admit of their seeing any hout craning their necks and looking up; but lights in frowsy windows d there, and the rolling of distant carriages, and the new expression that s of the stir of men, they find to be comfortable. Mr. Guppy, noiselessly on the window-sill, resumes his whispering in quite a light-comedy tone. -the-bye, Tony, don't forget old Smallweed;" meaning the Younger of me. "I have not let him into this, you know. That grandfather of his is n by half. It runs in the family."

emember," says Tony. "I am up to all that."

d as to Krook," resumes Mr. Guppy. "Now, do you suppose he really t hold of any other papers of importance, as he has boasted to you, since ve been such allies?"

shakes his head. "I don't know. Can't imagine. If we get through sines without rousing his suspicions, I shall be better informed no doubt. an I know without seeing them, when he don't know himself? He is always gout words from them, and chalking them over the table and the shop-wall, ding what this is, and what that is; but his whole stock from beginning to ay easily be the waste paper he bought it as, for anything I can say. It's mania with him, to think he is possessed of documents. He has been o learn to read them this last quarter of a century, I should judge, from e tells me."

ow did he first come by that idea, though? that's the question," Mr. suggests with one eye shut, after a little forensic meditation. "He may ind papers in something he bought, where papers were not supposed to d may have got it into his shrewd head, from the manner and place of their lment, that they are worth something."

he may have been taken in, in some pretended bargain. Or he may have muddled altogether, by long staring at whatever he *has* got, and by drink, hanging about the Lord Chancellor's Court and hearing of documents for returns Mr. Weevle.

Guppy sitting on the window-sill, nodding his head and balancing all these lities in his mind, continues thoughtfully to tap it, and clasp it, and mea- with his hand, until he hastily draws his hand away.

hat, in the Devil's name," he says, "is this! Look at my fingers!"

nck, yellow liquor defiles them, which is offensive to the touch and sight are offensive to the smell. A stagnant, sickening oil, with some natural on in it that makes them both shudder.

hat have you been doing here? What have you been pouring out of w?"

ouring out of window! Nothing, I swear! Never, since I have been here!" he lodger.

yet look here—an I look here! When he brings the candle, here, from ner of the window-sill, it slowly drips, and creeps away down the bricks; les in a little thick nauseous pool.

us is a horrible house," says Mr. Guppy, latting down the window. me some water, or I shall cut my hand off."

so washes, and rubs, and scrubs, and smells, and washes, that he has not estored himself with a glass of brandy, and stood silently before the fire, saint Paul's bell strikes twelve, and all those other bells strike twelve from wer of various heights in the dark air, and in their many tones. When all t again, the lodger says:

s the appointed time at last. Shall I go?"

Mr. Guppy nods, and gives him a "lucky touch" on the back; but n
the washed hand, though it is his right hand.

He goes down-stairs; and Mr. Guppy tries to compose himself, before t
for waiting a long time. But in no more than a minute or two the stairs
and Tony comes swiftly back.

"Have you got them?"

"Got them! No. The old man's not there."

He has been so horribly frightened in the short interval, that his terro
the other, who makes a rush at him, and asks loudly, "What's the matter

"I couldn't make him hear, and I softly opened the door and looked in.
the burning smell is there—and the soot is there, and the oil is there—an
not there!"—Tony ends this with a groan.

Mr. Guppy takes the light. They go down, more dead than alive, and h
one another, push open the door of the back shop. The cat has retreated
to it, and stands snarling—not at them; at something on the ground, betw
fire. There is a very little fire left in the grate, but there is a smouldering
rating vapour in the room, and a dark greasy coating on the walls and c
The chairs and table, and the bottle so rarely absent from the table, all st
usual. On one chair-back, hang the old man's hairy cap and coat.

"Look!" whispers the lodger, pointing his friend's attention to these
with a trembling finger. "I told you so. When I saw him last, he took h
off, took out the little bundle of old letters, hung his cap on the back of the
—his coat was there already, for he had pulled that off, before he went to p
shutters up—and I left him turning the letters over in his hand, standing
where that crumbled black thing is upon the floor."

Is he hanging somewhere? They look up. No.

"See!" whispers Tony. "At the foot of the same chair, there lies a di
of thin red cord that they tie up pens with. That went round the letters
undid it slowly, leering and laughing at me, before he began to turn them
and threw it there. I saw it fall."

"What's the matter with the cat?" says Mr. Guppy. "Look at her!"

"Mad, I think. And no wonder in this evil place."

They advance slowly, looking at all these things. The cat remains wher
found her, still snarling at the something on the ground, before the fi
between the two chairs. What is it? Hold up the light.

Here is a small burnt patch of flooring; here is the tinder from a little h
of burnt paper, but not so light as usual, seeming to be steeped in something
here is—is it the cinder of a small charred and broken log of wood sprinkle
white ashes, or is it coal? O Horror, he IS here! and this from which w
away, striking out the light and overturning one another into the street, is w
represents him.

Help, help, help! come into this house for Heaven's sake!

Plenty will come in, but none can help. The Lord Chancellor of that
true to his title in his last act, has died the death of all Lord Chancellors
Courts, and of all authorities in all places under all names soever, where
pretences are made, and where injustice is done. Call the death by any nam
Highness will, attribute it to whom you will, or say it might have been pre
how you will, it is the same death eternally—inborn, inbred, engendered
corrupted humours of the vicious body itself, and that only—Spontaneous
bustion, and none other of all the deaths that can be died.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

INTERLOPERS.

do those two gentlemen not very neat about the cuffs and buttons who
ed the last Coroner's Inquest at the Sol's Arms, reappear in the precincts
rprising swiftness (being, in fact, breathlessly fetched by the active and
gent beadle), and institute perquisitions through the court, and dive into the
parlour, and write with ravenous little pens on tissue-paper. Now do they
own, in the watches of the night, how the neighbourhood of Chancery Lane
sterday, at about midnight, thrown into a state of the most intense agitation
citement by the following alarming and horrible discovery. Now do they
th how it will doubtless be remembered, that some time back a painful
ion was created in the public mind, by a case of mysterious death from
occurring in the first floor of the house occupied as a rag, bottle, and general
e store shop, by an eccentric individual of intemperate habits, far advanced
, named Krook; and how, by a remarkable coincidence, Krook was
ned at the Inquest, which it may be recollected was held on that occasion
Sol's Arms, a well-conducted tavern, immediately adjoining the premises
stion, on the west side, and licensed to a highly respectable landlord, Mr.
George Bogsby. Now do they show (in as many words as possible), how
some hours of yesterday evening a very peculiar smell was observed by the
tants of the court, in which the tragical occurrence which forms the subject
present account transpired; and which odour was at one time so powerful,
Ir. Swills, a comic vocalist, professionally engaged by Mr. J. G. Bogsby,
mself stated to our reporter that he mentioned to Miss M. Melvilleson, a
some pretensions to musical ability, likewise engaged by Mr. J. G. Bogsby
at a series of concerts called Harmonic Assemblies or Meetings, which it
appear are held at the Sol's Arms, under Mr. Bogsby's direction, pursuant
Act of George the Second, that he (Mr. Swills) found his voice seriously
d by the impure state of the atmosphere; his jocose expression, at the time,
"that he was like an empty post-office, for he hadn't a single note in
How this account of Mr. Swills is entirely corroborated by two intelligent
d females residing in the same court, and known respectively by the names
. Piper and Mrs. Perkins; both of whom observed the fœtid effluvia, and
ed them as being emitted from the premises in the occupation of Krook,
fortunate deceased. All this and a great deal more, the two gentlemen,
ave formed an amicable partnership in the melancholy catastrophe, write
on the spot; and the boy population of the court (out of bed in a moment)
up the shutters of the Sol's Arms parlour, to behold the tops of their heads
they are about it.

whole court, adult as well as boy, is sleepless for that night, and can do
g but wrap up its many heads, and talk of the ill-fated house, and look at it.
Flite has been bravely rescued from her chamber, as if it were in flames, and
modated with a bed at the Sol's Arms. The Sol neither turns off its gas
nts its door, all night; for any kind of public excitement makes good for
l, and causes the court to stand in need of comfort. The house has not
so much in the stomachic article of cloves, or in brandy-and-water warm,
the Inquest. The moment the potboy heard what had happened, he rolled
shirt-sleeves tight to his shoulders, and said, "There'll be a run upon us!"
first outcry, Young Piper dashed off for the fire-engines; and returned in

"This is not a time," says Mr. Bogsby, "to haggle about money; looks something sharply after it, over the counter, "give your orde gentlemen, and you're welcome to whatever you put a name to."

Thus entreated, the two gentlemen (Mr. Weevle especially) put s many things that in course of time they find it difficult to put a name quite distinctly; though they still relate, to all new comers, some ve night they have had of it, and of what they said, and what they d what they saw. Meanwhile, one or other of the policemen often flit door, and pushing it open a little way at the full length of his arm, lo outer gloom. Not that he has any suspicions, but that he may as well they are up to, in there.

Thus, night pursues its leaden course; finding the court still out of the unwonted hours, still treating and being treated, still conducting larly to a court that has had a little money left it unexpectedly. Th length with slow-retreating steps departs, and the lamplighter going like an executioner to a despotic king, strikes off the little heads of in aspired to lessen the darkness. Thus, the day cometh, whether or no.

And the day may discern, even with its dim London eye, that th been up all night. Over and above the faces that have fallen drowsi and the heels that lie prone on hard floors instead of beds, the brick physiognomy of the very court itself looks worn and jaded. And now houshood waking up, and beginning to hear of what has happened, co ing in, half-dressed, to ask questions; and the two policemen and (who are far less impressible externally than the court) have enough to the door.

"Good gracious, gentlemen!" says Mr. Snagsby, coming up. "W hear!"

"Why, it's true," returns one of the policemen. "That's what move on here, come!"

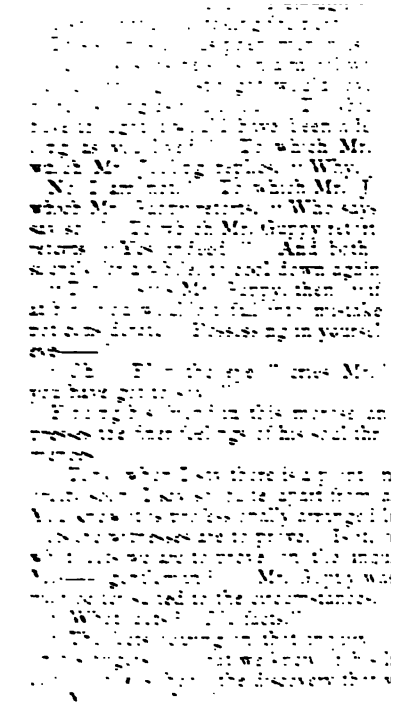
"Why, good gracious, gentlemen," says Mr. Snagsby, somewh backed away, "I was at this door last night betwixt ten and eleven conversation with the young man who lodges here."

"Indeed?" returns the policeman. "You will find the young ma then. Now move on here, some of you."

"Not hurt, I hope?" says Mr. Snagsby.

he morning and stand before the beer-engine, with her eyes fixed upon
an accusing spirit, strikes him dumb.
lear," says Mr. Snagsby, when his tongue is loosened, "will you take
? A little—not to put too fine a point upon it—drop of shrub?"
' says Mrs. Snagsby.
love, you know these two gentlemen?"
!" says Mrs. Snagsby; and in a rigid manner acknowledges their pre-
ll fixing Mr. Snagsby with her eye.
evoted Mr. Snagsby cannot bear this treatment. He takes Mrs. Snagsby
nd, and leads her aside to an adjacent cask.
ittle woman, why do you look at me in that way? Pray don't do it."
n't help my looks," says Mrs. Snagsby, "and if I could I
."
nagsby, with his cough of meekness, rejoins,—"Wouldn't you really,
?" and meditates. Then coughs his cough of trouble, and says, "This
dful mystery, my love!" still fearfully disconcerted by Mrs. Snagsby's

," returns Mrs. Snagsby, shaking her head, "a dreadful mystery."
ittle woman," urges Mr. Snagsby, in a piteous manner, "don't for good-
e, speak to me with that bitter expression, and look at me in that search-
I beg and entreat of you not to do it. Good Lord, you don't suppose
uld go spontaneously combusting any person, my dear?"
't say," returns Mrs. Snagsby.
asty review of his unfortunate position, Mr. Snagsby "can't say," either.
t prepared positively to deny that he may have had something to do with
has had something—he don't know what—to do with so much in this
n that is mysterious, that it is possible he may even be implicated, with-
ing it, in the present transaction. He faintly wipes his forehead with his
hief, and gasps.
ife," says the unhappy stationer, "would you have any objections to
why, being in general so delicately circumspect in your conduct, you come
ine Vaults before breakfast?"
do *you* come here?" inquires Mrs. Snagsby.
lear, merely to know the rights of the fatal accident which has happened
nerable party who has been—combusted." Mr. Snagsby has made a
suppress a groan. "I should then have related them to you, my love,
French roll."
e say you would! You relate everything to me, Mr. Snagsby."
y—my lit—?"
ould be glad," says Mrs. Snagsby, after contemplating his increased
with a severe and sinister smile, "if you would come home with me;
ou may be safer there, Mr. Snagsby, than anywhere else."
ove, I don't know but what I may be, I am sure. I am ready to go."
agsby casts his eye forlornly round the bar, gives Messrs. Weevle and
od morning, assures them of the satisfaction with which he sees them
l, and accompanies Mrs. Snagsby from the Sol's Arms. Before night,
whether he may not be responsible for some inconceivable part in the
he which is the talk of the whole neighbourhood, is almost resolved into
by Mrs. Snagsby's pertinacity in that fixed gaze. His mental sufferings
eat, that he entertains wandering ideas of delivering himself up to justice,
iring to be cleared, if innocent, and punished with the utmost rigour of the
uilty.
'eevle and Mr. Guppy, having taken their breakfast, step into Lincoln's



"Now, Tony," says Mr. Guppy, taking his arm again, and walking him slowly n, "I should like to know, in a friendly way, whether you have yet thought over the many advantages of your continuing to live at that place?"

"What do you mean?" says Tony, stopping.

"Whether you have yet thought over the many advantages of your continuing to live at that place?" repeats Mr. Guppy, walking him on again.

"At what place? *That* place?" pointing in the direction of the rag and bottle shop.

Mr. Guppy nods.

"Why, I wouldn't pass another night there, for any consideration that you could offer me," says Mr. Weevle, haggardly staring.

"Do you mean it though, Tony?"

"Mean it! Do I look as if I mean it? I feel as if I do; I know that," says Mr. Weevle, with a very genuine shudder.

"Then the possibility, or probability—for such it must be considered—of your never being disturbed in possession of those effects, lately belonging to a lone old man who seemed to have no relation in the world; and the certainty of your being able to find out what he really had got stored up there; don't weigh with you at all against last night, Tony, if I understand you?" says Mr. Guppy, biting his thumb with the appetite of vexation.

"Certainly not. Talk in that cool way of a fellow's living there?" cries Mr. Weevle, indignantly. "Go and live there yourself."

"O! I, Tony!" says Mr. Guppy, soothing him. "I have never lived there, and couldn't get a lodging there now; whereas you have got one."

"You are welcome to it," rejoins his friend, "and—ugh!—you may make yourself at home in it."

"Then you really and truly at this point," says Mr. Guppy, "give up the whole thing, if I understand you, Tony?"

"You never," returns Tony, with a most convincing steadfastness, "said a truer word in all your life. I do!"

While they are so conversing, a hackney-coach drives into the square, on the box of which vehicle a very tall hat makes itself manifest to the public. Inside the coach, and consequently not so manifest to the multitude, though sufficiently so to the two friends, for the coach stops almost at their feet, are the venerable Mr. Smallweed and Mrs. Smallweed, accompanied by their grand-daughter Judy.

An air of haste and excitement pervades the party; and as the tall hat (surmounting Mr. Smallweed the younger) alights, Mr. Smallweed the elder pokes his head out of window, and bawls to Mr. Guppy, "How de do, sir! How de do!"

"What do Chick and his family want here at this time of the morning, I wonder?" says Mr. Guppy, nodding to his familiar.

"My dear sir," cries Grandfather Smallweed, "would you do me a favour? Would you and your friend be so very obleeging as to carry me into the public-house in the court, while Bart and his sister bring their grandmother along? Would you do an old man that good turn, sir?"

Mr. Guppy looks at his friend, repeating inquiringly, "the public-house in the court?" And they prepare to bear the venerable burden to the Sol's Arms.

"There's your fare!" says the Patriarch to the coachman with a fierce grin, and shaking his incapable fist at him. "Ask me for a penny more, and I'll have my lawful revenge upon you. My dear young men, be easy with me, if you please. Allow me to catch you round the neck. I won't squeeze you tighter than I can help. O Lord! O dear me! O my bones!"

It is well that the Sol is not far off, for Mr. Weevle presents an apoplectic

ren and sevenpence! Seventy-six thousand bags of money! Seventy-
ed thousand million of parcels of bank notes!"
somebody give me a quart pot?" exclaims her exasperated husband,
elplessly about him, and finding no missile within his reach. "Will
obleege me with a spittoon? Will somebody hand me anything hard
ng to pelt at her? You hag, you cat, you dog, you brimstone barker!"
Smallweed, wrought up to the highest pitch by his own eloquence,
rows Judy at her grandmother in default of anything else, by butting
g virgin at the old lady with such force as he can muster, and then
into his chair in a heap.
e me up, somebody, if you'll be so good," says the voice from within the
ggling bundle into which he has collapsed. "I have come to look
property. Shake me up; and call in the police on duty at the next
he explained to about the property. My solicitor will be here presently
the property. Transportation or the gallows for anybody who shall
property!" As his dutiful grandchildren set him up, panting, and
im through the usual restorative process of shaking and punching, he
ts like an echo, "the—the property! The property!—property!"
eevle and Mr. Guppy look at each other; the former as having relin-
he whole affair; the latter with a discomfited countenance, as having
d some lingering expectations yet. But there is nothing to be done in
a to the Smallweed interest. Mr. Tulkinghorn's clerk comes down from
l pew in the chambers, to mention to the police that Mr. Tulkinghorn is
e for its being all correct about the next of kin, and that the papers and
ll be formally taken possession of in due time and course. Mr. Small-
t once permitted so far to assert his supremacy as to be carried on a visit
ent into the next house, and up-stairs into Miss Flite's deserted room,
looks like a hideous bird of prey newly added to her aviary.
rival of this unexpected heir soon taking wind in the court, still makes
the Sol, and keeps the court upon its mettle. Mrs. Piper and Mrs.
kink it hard upon the young man if there really is no will, and consider
dsome present ought to be made him out of the estate. Young Piper
g Perkins, as members of that restless juvenile circle which is the terror
-passengers in Chancery Lane, crumble into ashes behind the pump and
archway, all day long; where wild yells and hootings take place over
ims. Little Swills and Miss M. Melvilleson entered into affable conver-
h their patrons, feeling that these unusual occurrences level the barriers
professionals and non-professionals. Mr. Bogsby puts up "The popular
ING DEATH! with chorus by the whole strength of the company," as
Harmonic feature of the week; and announces in the bill that "J. G. B.
to do so at a considerable extra expense, in consequence of a wish which
very generally expressed at the bar by a large body of respectable indi-
d in homage to a late melancholy event which has aroused so much
" There is one point connected with the deceased, upon which the
rticularly anxious; namely, that the fiction of a full-sized coffin should
ed, though there is so little to put in it. Upon the undertaker's stating
's bar in the course of the day, that he has received orders to construct
ster," the general solicitude is much relieved, and it is considered that
lowed's conduct does him great honour.
the court, and a long way out of it, there is considerable excitement too;
f science and philosophy come to look, and carriages set down doctors
mer who arrive with the same intent, and there is more learned talk
lammable gases and phosphuretted hydrogen than the court has ever

The old man of the name of Tulkinghorn

rustling. Is it—? No, it's no ghost; but fair flesh and blood, most brilliantly dressed.

"I have to beg your ladyship's pardon," Mr. Guppy stammers, very downcast. "This is an inconvenient time ——"

"I told you, you could come at any time." She takes a chair, looking straight at him as on the last occasion.

"Thank your ladyship. Your ladyship is very affable."

"You can sit down." There is not much affability in her tone.

"I don't know, your ladyship, that it's worth while my sitting down and detaining you, for I—I have not got the letters that I mentioned when I had the honour of waiting on your ladyship."

"Have you come merely to say so?"

"Merely to say so, your ladyship." Mr. Guppy besides being depressed, disappointed, and uneasy, is put at a further disadvantage by the splendour and beauty of her appearance. She knows its influence perfectly; has studied it too well to miss a grain of its effect on any one. As she looks at him so steadily and coldly, he not only feels conscious that he has no guide, in the least perception of what is really the complexion of her thoughts; but also that he is being every moment, as it were, removed further and further from her.

She will not speak, it is plain. So he must.

"In short, your ladyship," says Mr. Guppy, like a meanly penitent thief, "the person I was to have had the letters of, has come to a sudden end, and ——" He stops. Lady Dedlock calmly finishes the sentence.

"And the letters are destroyed with the person?"

Mr. Guppy would say no, if he could—as he is unable to hide.

"I believe so, your ladyship."

If he could see the least sparkle of relief in her face now? No, he could see no such thing, even if that brave outside did not utterly put him away, and he were not looking beyond it and about it.

He falters an awkward excuse or two for his failure.

"Is this all you have to say?" inquires Lady Dedlock, having heard him out—or as nearly out as he can stumble.

Mr. Guppy thinks that's all.

"You had better be sure that you wish to say nothing more to me; this being the last time you will have the opportunity."

Mr. Guppy is quite sure. And indeed he has no such wish at present, by any means.

"That is enough. I will dispense with excuses. Good evening to you!" and she rings for Mercury to show the young man of the name of Guppy out.

But in that house, in that same moment, there happens to be an old man of the name of Tulkinghorn. And that old man, coming with his quiet foot-step to the library, has his hand at that moment on the handle of the door—comes in—and comes face to face with the young man as he is leaving the room.

One glance between the old man and the lady; and for an instant the blind that is always down flies up. Suspicion, eager and sharp, looks out. Another instant; close again.

"I beg your pardon, Lady Dedlock. I beg your pardon a thousand times. It is so very unusual to find you here at this hour. I supposed the room was empty. I beg your pardon!"

"Stay!" She negligently calls him back. "Remain here, I beg. I am going out to dinner. I have nothing more to say to this young man!"

The disconcerted young man bows, as he goes out, and cringingly hopes Sir Mr. Tulkinghorn of the Fields is well.

"Aye, aye?" says the lawyer, looking at him from under his bent h
though he has no need to look again—not he. "From Kenge and Car
surely?"

"Kenge and Carboy's, Mr. Tulkinghorn. Name of Guppy, sir."

"To be sure. Why, thank you, Mr. Guppy, I am very well!"

"Happy to hear it, sir. You can't be too well, sir, for the credit o
profession."

"Thank you, Mr. Guppy!"

Mr. Guppy sneaks away. Mr. Tulkinghorn, such a foil in his old-fas
rusty black to Lady Dedlock's brightness, hands her down the staircase t
carriage. He returns rubbing his chin, and rubs it a good deal in the co
the evening.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A TURN OF THE SCREW.

"Now, what," says Mr. George, "may this be? Is it blank cartridge, or
A flash in the pan, or a shot?"

An open letter is the subject of the trooper's speculations, and it see
perplex him mightily. He looks at it at arm's length, brings it close to
holds it in his right hand, holds it in his left hand, reads it with his head o
side, with his head on that side, contracts his eyebrows, elevates them;
cannot satisfy himself. He smooths it out upon the table with his heavy
and thoughtfully walking up and down the gallery, makes a halt before it
now and then, to come upon it with a fresh eye. Even that won't do. "I
Mr. George still muses, "blank cartridge or ball?"

Phil Squod, with the aid of a brush and paint-pot, is employed in the di
whitening the targets; softly whistling, in quick-march-time, and in drum
fife manner, that he must and will go back again to the girl he left behind h

"Phil!" The trooper beckons as he calls him.

Phil approaches in his usual way; sidling off at first as if he were
anywhere else, and then bearing down upon his commander like a lig
charge. Certain splashes of white show in high relief upon his dirty face, a
scrapes his one eye-brow with the handle of the brush.

"Attention, Phil! Listen to this."

"Steady, commander, steady."

"'Sir. Allow me to remind you (though there is no legal necessity f
doing so, as you are aware) that the bill at two months' date drawn on you
Mr. Matthew Bagnet, and by you accepted, for the sum of ninety-seven p
four shillings and nine-pence, will become due to-morrow, when you will
be prepared to take up the same on presentation. Yours, JOSHUA SMALLW
—What do you make of that Phil?"

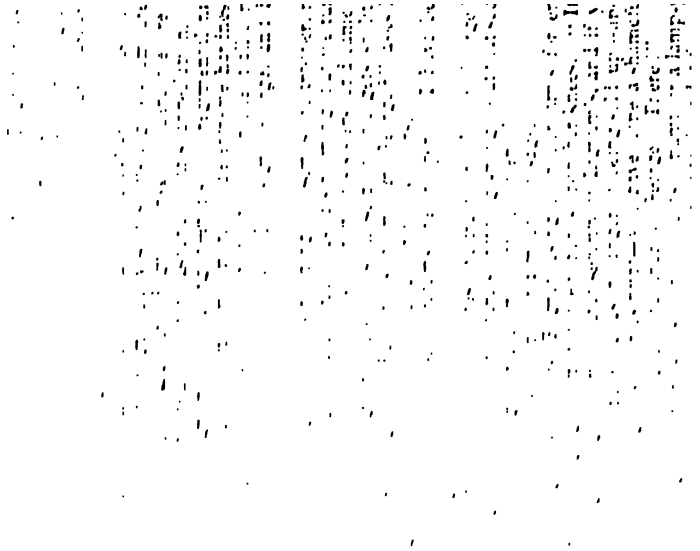
"Mischief, guv'nor."

"Why?"

"I think," replies Phil, after pensively tracing out a cross-wrinkle in hi
head with the brush-handle, "that mischeevious consequences is always
when money 's asked for."

"Lookye, Phil," says the trooper, sitting on the table. "First and
have paid, I may say, half as much again as this principal, in interest an
thing and another."

intimates, by sidling back a pace or two, with a very unaccountable wrench
wry face, that he does not regard the transaction as being made more
ng by this incident.
d lookye further, Phil," says the trooper, staying his premature conclusions
wave of his hand. "There has always been an understanding that this
to be what they call Renewed. And it has been renewed, no end of
What do you say now?"
y that I think the times is come to a end at last."
u do? Humph! I am much of the same mind myself."
hua Smallweed is him that was brought here in a chair?"
e same."
v'ner," says Phil, with exceeding gravity, "he's a leech in his dispositions.
crew and a wice in his actions, a snake in his twistings, and a lobster in
rs."
ng thus expressively uttered his sentiments, Mr. Squod, after waiting a
ascertain if any further remark be expected of him, gets back, by his
ries of movements, to the target he has in hand; and vigorously signifies,
his former musical medium, that he must and he will return to that ideal
ady. George having folded the letter, walks in that direction.
ere is a way, commander," says Phil, looking cunningly at him, "of
this."
ying the money, I suppose? I wish I could."
shakes his head. "No, guv'ner, no; not so bad as that. There is a
says Phil, with a highly artistic turn of his brush—"what I'm a-doing at
."
hitewashing."
nodis.
pretty way that would be! Do you know what would become of the
in that case? Do you know they would be ruined to pay off my old
You're a moral character," says the trooper, eyeing him in his large
th no small indignation, "upon my life you are, Phil!"
on one knee at the target, is in course of protesting earnestly, though not
many allegorical scoops of his brush, and smoothings of the white
round the rim with his thumb, that he had forgotten the Bagnet respon-
and would not so much as injure a hair of the head of any member of that
family, when steps are audible in the long passage without, and a cheerful
heard to wonder whether George is at home. Phil, with a look at his
hobbles up, saying, "Here's the guv'ner, Mrs. Bagnet! Here he is!"
old girl herself, accompanied by Mr. Bagnet, appears.
old girl never appears in walking trim, in any season of the year, without a
oth cloak, coarse and much worn but very clean, which is, undoubtedly, the
al garment rendered so interesting to Mr. Bagnet by having made its way
o Europe from another quarter of the globe, in company with Mrs. Bagnet
umbrella. The latter faithful appendage is also invariably a part of the
's presence out of doors. It is of no colour known in this life, and has a
ted wooden crook for a handle, with a metallic object let into its prow or
esembling a little model of a fan-light over a street door, or one of the
sses out of a pair of spectacles: which ornamental object has not that
us capacity of sticking to its post that might be desired in an article
sociated with the British army. The old girl's umbrella is of a fin by
f waist, and seems to be in need of stays—an appearance that is possibly
le to its having served, through a series of years, at home as a cupboard,
journeys as a carpet bag. She never puts it up, having the great



r-bath were over, and looks disconsolately at Mr. George; who has turned white, and looks distressfully at the grey cloak and straw bonnet.

lat," says the trooper, in a subdued voice, addressing him, but still looking wife; "I am sorry you take it so much to heart, because I do hope it's not l as that comes to. I certainly have, this morning, received this letter;" he reads aloud; "but I hope it may be set right yet. As to a rolling stone, what you say is true. I *am* a rolling stone; and I never rolled in any- way, I fully believe, that I rolled the least good to. But it's impos- for an old vagabond comrade to like your wife and family better than I m, Mat, and I trust you'll look upon me as forgivingly as you can. Don't I've kept anything from you. I haven't had the letter more than a quarter hour."

ld girl!" murmurs Mr. Bagnet, after a short silence, "will you tell him my n?"

h! Why didn't he marry," Mrs. Bagnet answers, half laughing and half ; "Joe Pouch's widder in North America? Then he wouldn't have got lf into these troubles."

he old girl," says Mr. Bagnet, "puts it correct—why didn't you?"

Well, she has a better husband by this time, I hope," returns the trooper. how, here I stand, this present day, *not* married to Joe Pouch's widder. shall I do? You see all I have got about me. It's not mine; it's yours. he word, and I'll sell off every morsel. If I could have hoped it would have ht in nearly the sum wanted, I'd have sold all long ago. Don't believe that ave you or yours in the lurch, Mat. I'd sell myself first. I only wish," he trooper, giving himself a disparaging blow in the chest, "that I knew of ne who'd buy such a second-hand piece of old stores."

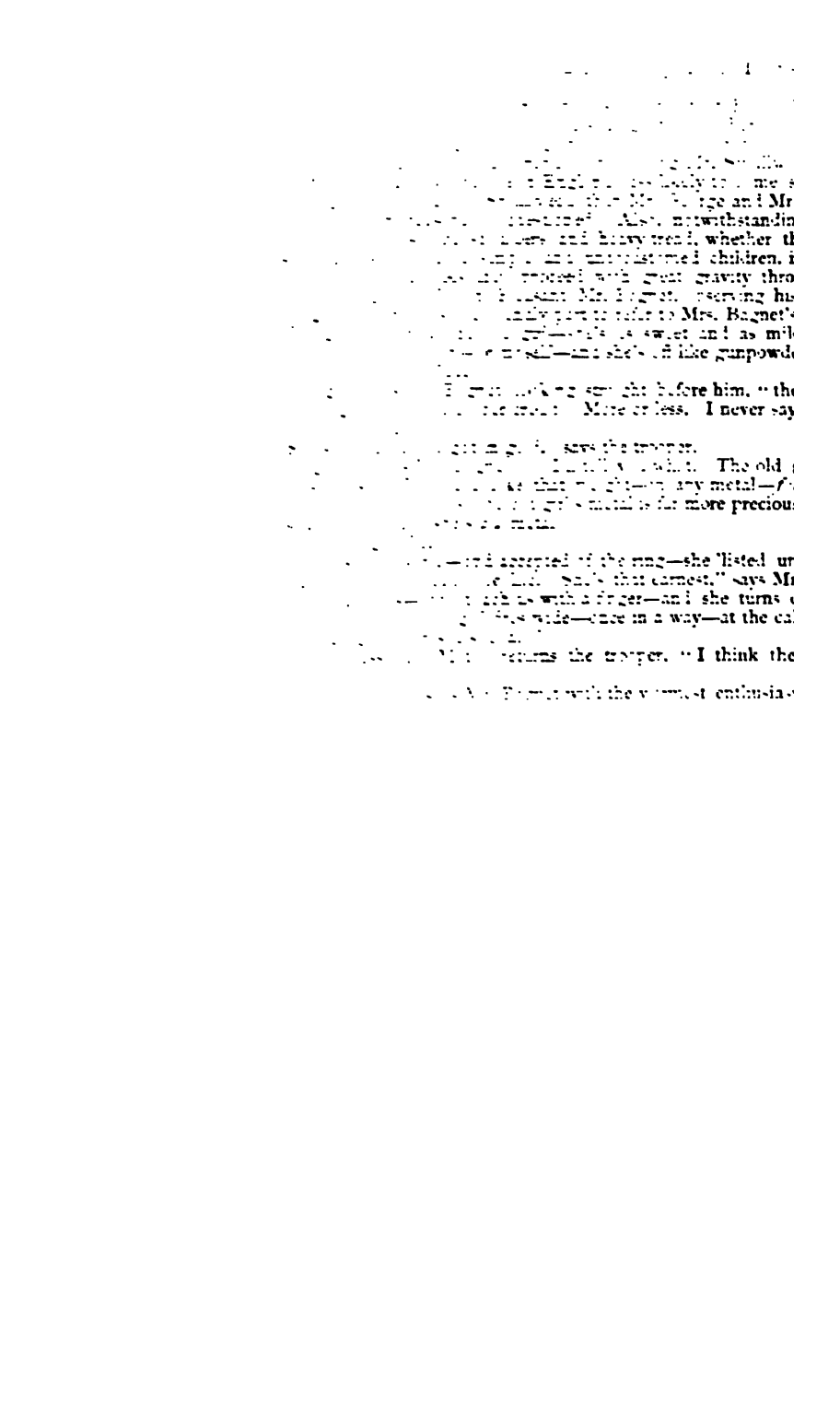
ld girl," murmurs Mr. Bagnet, "give him another bit of my mind."

eorge," says the old girl, "you are not so much to be blamed, on full con- tion, except for ever taking this business without the means."

nd that was like me!" observes the penitent trooper, shaking his head. e me, I know."

ilence! The old girl," says Mr. Bagnet, "is correct—in her way of giving inions—hear me out!"

hat was when you never ought to have asked for the security, George, and you never ought to have got it, all things considered. But what's done, can't lone. You are always an honourable and straightforward fellow, as far as lays ur power, though a little flighty. On the other hand, you can't admit but it's natural in us to be anxious, with such a thing hanging over our heads, get and forgive all round, George. Come! Forget and forgive all round!" . Bagnet, giving him one of her honest hands, and giving her husband the Mr. George gives each of them one of his, and holds them while he speaks. do assure you both, there's nothing I wouldn't do to discharge this obligation. hatever I have been able to scrape together, has gone every two months in g it up. We have lived plainly enough here, Phil and I. But the Gallery quite do what was expected of it, and it's not in short, it's not the Mint. wrong in me to take it? Well, so it was. But I was in a manner drawn hat step, and I thought it might steady me, and set me up, and you'll overlook my having such expectations, and upon my soul, I am very much d to you, and very much ashamed of myself." With these concluding , Mr. George gives a shake to each of the hands he holds, and, relin- ng them, backs a pace or two, in a broad-chested upright attitude, as if he nade a final confession, and were immediately going to be shot with all ry honours.



the drawer of his chair as if it were a paper foot-bath, and Mrs. Smallweed obscured with the cushion like a bird that is not to sing.

"My dear friend," says Grandfather Smallweed, with those two lean affectionate arms of his stretched forth. "How de do? How de do? Who is our friend, my dear friend?"

"Why this," returns George, not able to be very conciliatory at first, "is Matthew Bagnet, who has obliged me in that matter of ours, you know."

"Oh! Mr. Bagnet? Surely!" The old man looks at him under his hand.

"Hope you're well, Mr. Bagnet? Fine man, Mr. George! Military air, sir!"

No chairs being offered, Mr. George brings one forward for Bagnet, and one for himself. They sit down; Mr. Bagnet as if he had no power of bending himself, except at the hips, for that purpose.

"Judy," says Mr. Smallweed, "bring the pipe."

"Why, I don't know," Mr. George interposes, "that the young woman need give herself that trouble, for to tell you the truth, I am not inclined to smoke it to-day."

"Ain't you?" returns the old man. "Judy, bring the pipe."

"The fact is, Mr. Smallweed," proceeds George, "that I find myself in rather an unpleasant state of mind. It appears to me, sir, that your friend in the city has been playing tricks."

"O dear no!" says Grandfather Smallweed. "He never does that!"

"Don't he? Well, I am glad to hear it, because I thought it might be *his* doing. This, you know, I am speaking of. This letter."

Grandfather Smallweed smiles in a very ugly way, in recognition of the letter.

"What does it mean?" asks Mr. George.

"Judy," says the old man. "Have you got the pipe? Give it to me. Did you say what does it mean, my good friend?"

"Aye! Now, come, come, you know, Mr. Smallweed," urges the trooper, constraining himself to speak as smoothly and confidentially as he can, holding the open letter in one hand, and resting the broad knuckles of the other on his thigh; "a good lot of money has passed between us, and we are face to face at the present moment, and are both well aware of the understanding there has always been. I am prepared to do the usual thing which I have done regularly, and to keep this matter going. I never got a letter like this from you before, and I have been a little put about by it this morning; because here's my friend Matthew Bagnet, who, you know, had none of the money——"

"I *don't* know it, you know," says the old man, quietly.

"Why, con-found you—it, I mean—I tell you so; don't I?"

"Oh, yes, you tell me so," returns Grandfather Smallweed. "But I don't know it."

"Well!" says the trooper, swallowing his fire. "*I* know it."

Mr. Smallweed replies with excellent temper, "Ah! that's quite another thing!" And adds, "but it don't matter. Mr. Bagnet's situation is all one, whether or no."

The unfortunate George makes a great effort to arrange the affair comfortably, and to propitiate Mr. Smallweed by taking him upon his own terms.

"That's just what I mean. As you say, Mr. Smallweed, here's Matthew Bagnet liable to be fixed whether or no. Now, you see, that makes his good lady very uneasy in her mind, and me too; for, whereas I'm a harum-scarum sort of good-for-nought, that more kicks than halfpence come natural to, why he's a steady family man, don't you see? Now, Mr. Smallweed," says the trooper, gaining confidence as he proceeds in his soldierly mode of doing business, "although you and I are good friends enough in a certain sort of way, I am well aware that I can't ask you to let my friend Bagnet off entirely."

"O dear, you are too modest. You can *ask* me anything, Mr. George. is an Ogreish kind of jocularity in Grandfather Smallweed to-day.)

"And you can refuse, you mean, eh? Or not you so much, perhaps friend in the city? Ha ha ha!"

"Ha ha ha!" echoes Grandfather Smallweed. In such a very hard ma with eyes so particularly green, that Mr. Bagnet's natural gravity is m cued by the contemplation of that venerable man.

"Come!" says the sanguine George, "I am glad to find we can be because I want to arrange this pleasantly. Here's my friend Bagnet, an I. We'll settle the matter on the spot, if you please, Mr. Smallweed, in way. And you'll ease my friend Bagnet's mind, and his family's min deal, if you'll just mention to him what our understanding is."

Here some shrill spectre cries out in a mocking manner, "O good O!"—unless, indeed, it be the sportive Judy, who is found to be sit the startled visitors look round, but whose chin has received a re expressive of derision and contempt. Mr. Bagnet's gravity becomes profound.

"But I think you asked me, Mr. George;" old Smallweed, who all has had the pipe in his hand, is the speaker now; "I think you asked did the letter mean?"

"Why, yes, I did," returns the trooper, in his off-hand way: "but I to know particularly, if it's all correct and pleasant."

Mr. Smallweed, purposely balking himself in an aim at the troope throws the pipe on the ground and breaks it to pieces.

"That's what it means, my dear friend. I'll smash you. I'll crumble powder you. Go to the devil!"

The two friends rise and look at one another. Mr. Bagnet's gravity attained its profoundest point.

"Go to the devil!" repeats the old man. "I'll have no more of y smokings and swaggerings. What? You're an independent dragoon, to my lawyer (you remember where; you have been there before), and s independence now, will you? Come, my dear friend, there's a chanc Open the street door, Judy; put these blusterers out! Call in help if they Put 'em out!"

He vociferates this so loudly, that Mr. Bagnet, laying his hands on the of his comrade, before the latter can recover from his amazement, ge the outside of the street door; which is instantly slammed by the tr Judy. Utterly confounded, Mr. George awhile stands looking at the Mr. Bagnet, in a perfect abyss of gravity, walks up and down before parlour window, like a sentry, and looks in every time he passes; a revolving something in his mind.

"Come, Mat!" says Mr. George, when he has recovered himself, " try the lawyer. Now, what do you think of this rascal?"

Mr. Bagnet, stopping to take a farewell look into the parlour, replies shake of his head directed at the interior, "If my old girl had been have told him!" Having so discharged himself of the subject of his c he falls into step, and marches off with the trooper, shoulder to shoulde

When they present themselves in Lincoln's Inn Fields, Mr. Tulkingh gaged, and not to be seen. He is not at all willing to see them; for y have waited a full hour, and the clerk, on his bell being rung, takes portunity of mentioning as much, he brings forth no more encouragin than that Mr. Tulkinghorn has nothing to say to them, and they had wait. They do wait, however, with the perseverance of military tactic

last the bell rings again, and the client in possession comes out of Mr. Tulkinghorn's room.

The client is a handsome old lady; no other than Mrs. Rouncewell, housekeeper at Chesney Wold. She comes out of the sanctuary with a fair old-fashioned curtsey, and softly shuts the door. She is treated with some distinction there; for the clerk steps out of his pew to show her through the outer office, and to let her out. The old lady is thanking him for his attention, when she observes the comrades in waiting.

"I beg your pardon, sir, but I think those gentlemen are military?"

The clerk referring the question to them with his eye, and Mr. George not turning round from the almanack over the fire-place, Mr. Bagnet takes upon himself to reply, "Yes, ma'am. Formerly."

"I thought so. I was sure of it. My heart warms, gentlemen, at the sight of you. It always does at the sight of such. God bless you, gentlemen! You'll excuse an old woman; but I had a son once who went for a soldier. A fine handsome youth he was, and good in his bold way, though some people did disparage him to his poor mother. I ask your pardon for troubling you, sir. God bless you, gentlemen!"

"Same to you, ma'am!" returns Mr. Bagnet, with right good will.

There is something very touching in the earnestness of the old lady's voice, and in the tremble that goes through her quaint old figure. But Mr. George is so occupied with the almanack over the fire-place (calculating the coming months by it perhaps), that he does not look round until she has gone away, and the door is closed upon her.

"George," Mr. Bagnet gruffly whispers, when he does turn from the almanack at last. "Don't be cast down!" "Why, soldiers, why—should we be melancholy, boys?" Cheer up, my hearty!"

The clerk having now again gone in to say that they are still there, and Mr. Tulkinghorn being heard to return with some irascibility, "Let 'em come in then!" they pass into the great room with the painted ceiling, and find him standing before the fire.

"Now, you men, what do you want? Serjeant, I told you the last time I saw you that I don't desire your company here."

Serjeant replies—dashed within the last few minutes as to his usual manner of speech, and even as to his usual carriage—that he has received this letter, has been to Mr. Smallweed about it, and has been referred there.

"I have nothing to say to you," rejoins Mr. Tulkinghorn. "If you get into debt, you must pay your debts, or take the consequences. You have no occasion to come here to learn that, I suppose?"

Serjeant is sorry to say that he is not prepared with the money.

"Very well! Then the other man—this man, if this is he—must pay it for you."

Serjeant is sorry to add that the other man is not prepared with the money either.

"Very well! Then you must pay it between you, or you must both be sued for it, and both suffer. You have had the money and must refund it. You are not to pocket other people's pounds, shillings, and pence, and escape scot free."

The lawyer sits down in his easy-chair and stirs the fire. Mr. George hopes he will have the goodness to—

"I tell you, Serjeant, I have nothing to say to you. I don't like your associates, and don't want you here. This matter is not at all in my course of practice, and is not in my office. Mr. Smallweed is good enough to offer these affairs to me, but they are not in my way. You must go to Melchisedech's in Clifford's Inn."

"I must make an apology to you, sir," says Mr. George, "for presu upon you with so little encouragement—which is almost as unpleasant it can be to you; but would you let me say a private word to you?"

Mr. Tulkinghorn rises with his hands in his pockets, and walks into window recesses. "Now! I have no time to waste." In the midst perfect assumption of indifference, he directs a sharp look at the troop care to stand with his own back to the light, and to have the other wit towards it.

"Well, sir," says Mr. George, "this man with me is the other p cated in this unfortunate affair—nominally, only nominally—and my sol to prevent his getting into trouble on my account. He is a most respec with a wife and family; formerly in the Royal Artillery——"

"My friend, I don't care a pinch of snuff for the whole Royal Arti blishment—officers, men, tumbrils, waggons, horses, guns, and ammun

"'Tis likely, sir. But I care a good deal for Bagnet and his wife being injured on my account. And if I could bring them through this should have no help for it but to give up without any other considerat you wanted of me the other day."

"Have you got it here?"

"I have got it here, sir."

"Serjeant," the lawyer proceeds in his dry passionless manner, far m less in the dealing with, than any amount of vehemence, "make up while I speak to you, for this is final. After I have finished speaking I s the subject, and I won't re-open it. Understand that. You can leave few days, what you say you have brought here, if you choose; you away at once, if you choose. In case you choose to leave it here, I can you—I can replace this matter on its old footing, and I can go so far be give you a written undertaking that this man Bagnet shall never be troub way until you have been proceeded against to the utmost—that your m be exhausted before the creditor looks to his. This is in fact all but fr Have you decided?"

The trooper puts his hand into his breast, and answers with a long must do it, sir."

So Mr. Tulkinghorn, putting on his spectacles, sits down and writes taking; which he slowly reads and explains to Bagnet, who has all this staring at the ceiling, and who puts his hand on his bald head again, new verbal shower-bath, and seems exceedingly in need of the old g whom to express his sentiments. The trooper then takes from his brea folded paper, which he lays with an unwilling hand at the lawyer's elbo only a letter of instructions, sir. The last I ever had from him."

Look at a millstone, Mr. George, for some change in its expression, a find it quite as soon as in the face of Mr. Tulkinghorn when he opens the letter! He refolds it, and lays it in his desk, with a countenance as bable as Death.

Nor has he anything more to say or do, but to nod once in the same discourteous manner, and to say briefly, "You can go. Show thes there!" Being shown out, they repair to Mr. Bagnet's residence to di

Boiled beef and greens constitute the day's variety on the former requi pork and greens; and Mrs. Bagnet serves out the meal in the same wa sons it with the best of temper: being that rare sort of old girl that s Good to her arms without a hint that it might be Better; and catches any little spot of darkness near her. The spot on this occasion is the brow of Mr. George; he is unusually thoughtful and depressed. At

Bagnet trusts to the combined endearments of Quebec and Malta to restore him; but finding those young ladies sensible that their existing Bluffy is not the Bluffy of their usual frolicsome acquaintance, she winks off the light infantry, and leaves him to deploy at leisure on the open ground of the domestic hearth.

But he does not. He remains in close order, clouded and depressed. During the lengthy cleaning up and pattening process, when he and Mr. Bagnet are supplied with their pipes, he is no better than he was at dinner. He forgets to smoke, looks at the fire and ponders, lets his pipe out, fills the breast of Mr. Bagnet with perturbation and dismay, by showing that he has no enjoyment of tobacco.

Therefore when Mrs. Bagnet at last appears, rosy from the invigorating pail, and sits down to her work, Mr. Bagnet growls, "Old girl!" and winks monitions to her to find out what's the matter.

"Why, George!" says Mrs. Bagnet, quietly threading her needle. "How low you are?"

"Am I? Not good company? Well, I am afraid I am not."

"He ain't at all like Bluffy, mother!" cries little Malta.

"Because he ain't well, *I* think, mother," adds Quebec.

"Sure that's a bad sign not to be like Bluffy, too!" returns the trooper, kissing the young damsels. "But it's true," with a sigh—"true, I am afraid. These little ones are always right!"

"George," says Mrs. Bagnet, working busily, "if I thought you cross enough to think of anything that a shrill old soldier's wife—who could have bitten her tongue off afterwards, and ought to have done it almost—said this morning, I don't know what I shouldn't say to you now."

"My kind soul of a darling," returns the trooper. "Not a morsel of it."

"Because really and truly, George, what I said and meant to say, was that I trusted Lignum to you, and was sure you'd bring him through it. And you *have* brought him through it, noble!"

"Thank'ee, my dear!" says George. "I am glad of your good opinion."

In giving Mrs. Bagnet's hand, with her work in it, a friendly shake—for she took her seat beside him—the trooper's attention is attracted to her face. After looking at it for a little while as she plies her needle, he looks to young Woolwich, sitting on his stool in the corner, and beckons that fifer to him.

"See there, my boy," says George, very gently smoothing the mother's hair with his hand, "there's a good loving forehead for you! All bright with love of you, my boy. A little touched by the sun and the weather through following your father about and taking care of you, but as fresh and wholesome as a ripe apple on a tree."

Mr. Bagnet's face expresses, so far as in its wooden material lies, the highest approbation and acquiescence.

"The time will come, my boy," pursues the trooper, "when this hair of your mother's will be grey, and this forehead all crossed and re-crossed with wrinkles—and a fine old lady she'll be then. Take care, while you are young, that you can think in those days, '*I* never whitened a hair of her dear head. *I* never marked a sorrowful line in her face!' For of all the many things that you can think of when you are a man, you had better have *that* by you, Woolwich!"

Mr. George concludes by rising from his chair, [illegible] in it, and saying, with something of a hurry about him, that he'll [illegible] in the street a bit.

CHAPTER XXXV.

ESTHER'S NARRATIVE.

I LAY ill through several weeks, and the usual tenor of my life became like remembrance. But this was not the effect of time, so much as of the cha all my habits, made by the helplessness and inaction of a sick room. Before been confined to it many days, everything else seemed to have retired into a distance, where there was little or no separation between the various stages life which had been really divided by years. In falling ill, I seemed to crossed a dark lake, and to have left all my experiences, mingled together great distance, on the healthy shore.

My housekeeping duties, though at first it caused me great anxiety to thi they were unperformed, were soon as far off as the oldest of the old thi Greenleaf, or the summer afternoons when I went home from school with my folio under my arm, and my childish shadow at my side, to my godmother's I had never known before how short life really was, and into how small a the mind could put it.

While I was very ill, the way in which these divisions of time became co with one another, distressed my mind exceedingly. At once a child, an old and the little woman I had been so happy as, I was not only oppressed by and difficulties adapted to each station, but by the great perplexity of my trying to reconcile them. I suppose that few who have not been in such a tion can quite understand what I mean, or what painful unrest arose fro source.

For the same reason I am almost afraid to hint at that time in my disor seemed one long night, but I believe there were both nights and days in it. I laboured up colossal staircases, ever striving to reach the top, and ever tur I have seen a worm in a garden path, by some obstruction, and labouring I knew perfectly at intervals, and I think vaguely at most times, that I was bed; and I talked with Charley, and felt her touch, and knew her very we I would find myself complaining "O more of these never-ending stairs, Cha more and more—piled up to the sky, I think!" and labouring on again.

Dare I hint at that worse time when, strung together somewhere in grea space, there was a flaming necklace, or ring, or starry circle of some k which *I* was one of the beads! And when my only prayer was to be tak from the rest, and when it was such inexplicable agony and misery to be a the dreadful thing?

Perhaps the less I say of these sick experiences, the less tedious and th intelligible I shall be. I do not recall them to make others unhappy, or be am now the least unhappy in remembering them. It may be that if we knew of such strange afflictions, we might be the better able to alleviate their hor

The repose that succeeded, the long delicious sleep, the blissful rest, w my weakness I was too calm to have any care for myself, and could have (or so I think now) that I was dying; with no other emotion than with a love for those I left behind—this state can be perhaps more widely unde I was in this state when I first shrunk from the light as it twinkled on m more, and knew with a boundless joy for which no words are rapturous e that I should see again.

I had heard my Ada crying at the door, day and night; I had heard her to me that I was cruel and did not love her; I had heard her praying a

ploring to be let in to nurse and comfort me, and to leave my bedside no more; but I had only said, when I could speak, "Never, my sweet girl, never!" and I had over and over again reminded Charley that she was to keep my darling from the room, whether I lived or died. Charley had been true to me in that time of need, and with her little hand and her great heart had kept the door fast.

But now, my sight strengthening, and the glorious light coming every day more fully and brightly on me, I could read the letters that my dear wrote to me every morning and evening, and could put them to my lips and lay my cheek upon them with no fear of hurting her. I could see my little maid, so tender and so careful, going about the two rooms setting everything in order, and speaking cheerfully to Ada from the open window again. I could understand the stillness in the house, and the thoughtfulness it expressed on the part of all those who had always been so good to me. I could weep in the exquisite felicity of my heart, and be as happy in my weakness as ever I had been in my strength.

By-and-by, my strength began to be restored. Instead of lying, with so strange a calmness, watching what was done for me, as if it were done for some one else whom I was quietly sorry for, I helped it a little, and so on to a little more and much more, until I became useful to myself, and interested, and attached to life again.

How well I remember the pleasant afternoon when I was raised in bed with pillows for the first time, to enjoy a great tea-drinking with Charley! The little creature—sent into the world, surely, to minister to the weak and sick—was so happy, and so busy, and stopped so often in her preparations to lay her head upon my bosom, and fondle me, and cry with joyful tears she was so glad, she was so glad! that I was obliged to say, "Charley, if you go on in this way, I must lie down again, my darling, for I am weaker than I thought I was!" So Charley became as quiet as a mouse, and took her bright face here and there, across and across the two rooms, out of the shade into the divine sunshine, and out of the sunshine into the shade, while I watched her peacefully. When all her preparations were concluded and the pretty tea-table with its little delicacies to tempt me, and its white cloth, and its flowers, and everything so lovingly and beautifully arranged for me by Ada down-stairs, was ready at the bed-side, I felt sure I was steady enough to say something to Charley that was not new to my thoughts.

First, I complimented Charley on the room; and indeed it was so fresh and airy, so spotless and neat, that I could scarce believe I had been lying there so long. This delighted Charley, and her face was brighter than before.

"Yet, Charley," said I, looking round, "I miss something, surely, that I am accustomed to."

Poor little Charley looked round too, and pretended to shake her head, as if there were nothing absent.

"Are the pictures all as they used to be?" I asked her.

"Every one of them, miss," said Charley.

"And the furniture, Charley?"

"Except where I have moved it about, to make more room, miss."

"And yet," said I, "I miss some familiar object. Ah, I know what it is, Charley! It's the looking-glass."

Charley got up from the table, making as if she had forgotten something, and went into the next room; and I heard her sobbing.

I had thought of this very often. I was now certain of it. I could thank God that it was not a shock to me now. I called Charley back; and when she came, at first pretending to smile, but as she drew nearer to me, looking grieved, I took her in my arms, and said, "It matters very little, Charley. I hope I can do without my old face very well."

I hope it was not a poor thing in me to wish to be a little more meet to my altered self, before I met the eyes of the dear girl I longed so ardently to see; but it is the truth. I did. He understood me, I was sure; but I was not afraid of that. If it were a poor thing, I knew he would pass it over.

"Our spoilt little woman," said my guardian, "shall have her own way even in her inflexibility, though at the price, I know, of tears down-stairs. And see here! Here is Boythorn, heart of chivalry, breathing such ferocious vows as never were breathed on paper before, that if you don't go and occupy his whole house, he having already turned out of it expressly for that purpose, by Heaven and by earth he'll pull it down, and not leave one brick standing on another!"

And my guardian put a letter in m[illegible] without any ordinary beginning such as "My dear Jarndyce," but rushi[illegible]e into the words, "I swear if Miss Summerson do not come down and [illegible]session of my house, which I vacate for her this day at one o'clock, p.m., [illegible]en with the utmost seriousness, and in the most emphatic terms, going [illegible]ike the extraordinary declaration he had quoted. We did not appreciate [illegible]r the less for laughing heartily over it; and we settled that I should send [illegible]etter of thanks on the morrow, and accept his offer. It was a most agre[illegible]e to me; for all the places I could have thought of, I should have liked [illegible]none so well as Chesney Wold.

"Now, little housewife," said my g[illegible] looking at his watch, "I was strictly timed before I came up-stairs, for yo[illegible] not be tired too soon; and my time has waned away to the last minute. I have one other petition. Little Miss Flite, hearing a rumour that you were ill, made nothing of walking down here—twenty miles, poor soul, in a pair of dancing shoes—to inquire. It was Heaven's mercy we were at home, or she would have walked back again."

The old conspiracy to make me happy! Everybody seemed to be in it!

"Now, pet," said my guardian, "if it would not be irksome to you to admit the harmless little creature one afternoon, before you save Boythorn's otherwise devoted house from demolition, I believe you would make her prouder and better pleased with herself than I—though my eminent name *is* Jarndyce—could do in a lifetime."

I have no doubt he knew there would be something in the simple image of the poor afflicted creature, that would fall like a gentle lesson on my mind at that time. I felt it as he spoke to me. I could not tell him heartily enough how ready I was to receive her. I had always pitied her; never so much as now. I had always been glad of my little power to soothe her under her calamity; but never, never, half so glad before.

We arranged a time for Miss Flite to come out by the coach, and share my early dinner. When my guardian left me, I turned my face away upon my couch, and prayed to be forgiven if I, surrounded by such blessings, had magnified to myself the little trial that I had to undergo. The childish prayer of that old birthday, when I had aspired to be industrious, contented, and true-hearted, and to do good to some one, and win some love to myself if I could, came back into my mind with a reproachful sense of all the happiness I had since enjoyed, and all the affectionate hearts that had been turned towards me. If I were weak now, what had I profited by those mercies? I repeated the old childish prayer in its old childish words, and found that its old peace had not departed from it.

My guardian now came every day. In a week or so more, I could walk about our rooms, and hold long talks with Ada, from behind the window-curtain. Yet I never saw her; for I had not as yet the courage to look at the dear face, though I could have done so easily without her seeing me.

On the appointed day Miss Flite arrived. The poor little creature ran into my room quite forgetful of her usual dignity, and, crying from her very heart of hearts, "My dear Fitz-Jarndyce!" fell upon my neck and kissed me twenty times.

"Dear me!" said she, putting her hand into her reticule, "I have nothing here but documents, my dear Fitz-Jarndyce; I must borrow a pocket-handkerchief."

Charley gave her one, and the good creature certainly made use of it, for she held it to her eyes with both hands, and sat so, shedding tears for the next ten minutes.

"With pleasure, my dear Fitz-Jarndyce," she was careful to explain. "Not the least pain. Pleasure to see you well again. Pleasure at having the honour of being admitted to see you. I am so much fonder of you, my love, than of the Chancellor. Though I *do* attend Court regularly. By-the-bye, my dear, mentioning pocket-handkerchiefs——"

Miss Flite here looked at Charley, who had been to meet her at the place where the coach stopped. Charley glanced at me, and looked unwilling to pursue the suggestion.

"Ve-ry right!" said Miss Flite, "ve-ry correct. Truly! Highly indiscreet of me to mention it; but my dear Miss Fitz-Jarndyce, I am afraid I am at times (between ourselves, you wouldn't think it) a little—rambling you know," said Miss Flite, touching her forehead. "Nothing more."

"What were you going to tell me?" said I, smiling, for I saw she wanted to go on. "You have roused my curiosity, and now you must gratify it."

Miss Flite looked at Charley for advice in this important crisis, who said, "If you please, ma'am, you had better tell then," and therein gratified Miss Flite beyond measure.

"So sagacious, our young friend," said she to me, in her mysterious way. "Diminutive. But ve-ry sagacious! Well, my dear, it's a pretty anecdote. Nothing more. Still I think it charming. Who should follow us down the road from the coach, my dear, but a poor person in a very ungenteel bonnet——"

"Jenny, if you please, miss," said Charley.

"Just so!" Miss Flite acquiesced with the greatest suavity. "Jenny. Ye-es! And what does she tell our young friend, but that there has been a lady with a veil inquiring at her cottage after my dear Fitz-Jarndyce's health, and taking a handkerchief away with her as a little keepsake, merely because it was my amiable Fitz-Jarndyce's! Now, you know, so very prepossessing in the lady with the veil!"

"If you please, miss," said Charley, to whom I looked in some astonishment, "Jenny says that when her baby died, you left a handkerchief there, and that she put it away and kept it with the baby's little things. I think, if you please, partly because it was yours, miss, and partly because it had covered the baby."

"Diminutive," whispered Miss Flite, making a variety of motions about her own forehead to express intellect in Charley. "But ex-ceedingly sagacious! And so clear! My love, she's clearer than any Counsel I ever heard!"

"Yes, Charley," I returned. "I remember it. Well?"

"Well, miss," said Charley, "and that's the handkerchief the lady took. And Jenny wants you to know that she wouldn't have made away with it herself for a heap of money, but that the lady took it, and left some money instead. Jenny don't know her at all, if you please, miss?"

"Why, who can she be?" said I.

"My love," Miss Flite suggested, advancing her lips to my ear, with her most mysterious look, "in *my* opinion—don't mention this to our diminutive friend—she's the Lord Chancellor's wife. He's married, you know. And I understand she leads him a terrible life. Throws his lordship's papers into the fire, my dear, if he won't pay the jeweller!"

I did not think very much about this lady then, for I had an impression that it might be Caddy. Besides, my attention was diverted by my visitor, who was cold

after her ride, and looked hungry; and who, our dinner being brought in, requ
some little assistance in arraying herself with great satisfaction in a patchw
scarf and a much-worn and often-mended pair of gloves, which she had bro
down in a paper parcel. I had to preside, too, over the entertainment, consis
of a dish of fish, a roast fowl, a sweetbread, vegetables, pudding, and Madei
and it was so pleasant to see how she enjoyed it, and with what state and cerem
she did honour to it, that I was soon thinking of nothing else.

When we had finished, and had our little dessert before us, embellished by
hands of my dear, who would yield the superintendence of everything prepared
me to no one; Miss Flite was so very chatty and happy, that I thought I wo
lead her to her own history. [illegible] always pleased to talk about herself.
began by saying "You have [illegible] the Lord Chancellor many years, M
Flite?"

"O many, many, many ye[illegible] But I expect a Judgment. Shortly
There was an anxiety ever[illegible]ness, that made me doubtful if I h
done right in approaching th[illegible]ought I would say no more about it.

"My father expected a Ju[illegible]Miss Flite. "My brother. My sis
They all expected a Judgme[illegible]that I expect."

"They are all ——"

"Ye-es. Dead of course, n[illegible]she.

As I saw she would go on, [illegible] best to try to be serviceable to her
meeting the theme, rather than avoiding it.

"Would it not be wiser," said I, "to expect this Judgment no more?"

"Why, my dear," she answered promptly, "of course it would!"

"And to attend the Court no more?"

"Equally of course," said she. "Very wearing to be always in expectation
what never comes, my dear Fitz-Jarndyce! Wearing, I assure you, to the bone."

She slightly showed me her arm, and it was fearfully thin indeed.

"But, my dear," she went on, in her mysterious way, "there's a dreadf
attraction in the place. Hush! Don't mention it to our diminutive friend wh
she comes in. Or it may frighten her. With good reason. There's a cru
attraction in the place. You *can't* leave it. And you *must* expect."

I tried to assure her that this was not so. She heard me patiently and smiling
but was ready with her own answer.

"Aye, aye, aye! You think so, because I am a little rambling. Ve-ry absur
to be a little rambling, is it not? Ve-ry confusing, too. To the head. I find
so. But, my dear, I have been there many years, and I have noticed. It's th
Mace and Seal upon the table."

What could they do, did she think? I mildly asked her.

"Draw," returned Miss Flite. "Draw people on, my dear. Draw peace o
of them. Sense out of them. Good looks out of them. Good qualities out
them. I have felt them even drawing my rest away in the night. Cold a
glittering devils!"

She tapped me several times upon the arm, and nodded good-humouredly,
if she were anxious I should understand that I had no cause to fear her, thou
she spoke so gloomily, and confided these awful secrets to me.

"Let me see," said she. "I'll tell you my own case. Before they ever dre
me—before I had ever seen them—what was it I used to do? Tambourin
playing? No. Tambour work. I and my sister worked at tambour work. O
father and our brother had a builder's business. We all lived together. Ve
respectably, my dear! First, our father was drawn—slowly. Home was drea
with him. In a few years, he was a fierce, sour, angry bankrupt, without a kin
word or a kind look for any one. He had been so different, Fitz-Jarndyce. H

wn to a debtors' prison. There he died. Then our brother was drawn—
-to drunkenness. And rags. And death. Then my sister was drawn.
Never ask to what! Then I was ill, and in misery; and heard, as I had
ard before, that this was all the work of Chancery. When I got better, I
look at the Monster. And then I found out how it was, and I was drawn
here."

ig got over her own short narrative, in the delivery of which she had spoken
, strained voice, as if the shock were fresh upon her, she gradually resumed
l air of amiable importance.

i don't quite credit me, my dear! Well well! You will, some day. I
tle rambling. But I have noticed. I have seen many new faces come.
cious, within the influence of the Mace and Seal, in these many years. As
er's came there. As my brother's. As my sister's. As my own. I hear
ation Kenge, and the rest of them, say to the new faces, 'Here's little
ite. O you are new here; and you must come and be presented to little
ite!' Ve-ry good. Proud I am sure to have the honour! And we all
But, Fitz-Jarndyce, I know what will happen. I know, far better than
, when the attraction has begun. I know the signs, my dear. I saw them
Gridley. And I saw them end. Fitz-Jarndyce, my love," speaking low
I saw them beginning in our friend the Ward in Jarndyce. Let some
l him back. Or he'll be drawn to ruin."

ooked at me in silence for some moments, with her face gradually softening
mile. Seeming to fear that she had been too gloomy, and seeming also to
connexion in her mind, she said, politely, as she sipped her glass of wine,
my dear, as I was saying, I expect a Judgment. Shortly. Then I shall
my birds, you know, and confer estates."

much impressed by her allusion to Richard, and by the sad meaning, so
ustrated in her poor pinched form, that made its way through all her
nce. But happily for her, she was quite complacent again now, and
with nods and smiles.

, my dear," she said, gaily, reaching another hand to put it upon mine.
ave not congratulated me on my physician. Positively not once, yet!"

obliged to confess that I did not quite know what she meant.

physician, Mr. Woodcourt, my dear, who was so exceedingly attentive to
hough his services were rendered quite gratuitously. Until the Day of
nt. I mean *the* judgment that will dissolve the spell upon me of the Mace
l."

Woodcourt is so far away, now," said I, "that I thought the time for
ngratulation was past, Miss Flite."

, my child," she returned, "is it possible that you don't know what he
d?"

" said I.

what everybody has been talking of, my beloved Fitz-Jarndyce!"

" said I. "You forget how long I have been here."

t! My dear, for the moments true. I blame myself. But my memory
n drawn out of me, with everything else, by what I mention. Very
nfluence, is it not? Well, my dear, there has been a terrible shipwreck
hose East-Indian seas."

Woodcourt shipwrecked!"

't be agitated, my dear. He is safe. An awful scene. Death in all
Hundreds of dead and dying. Fire, storm, and darkness. Numbers of
wning thrown upon a rock. There, and through it all, my dear physician
ro. Calm and brave, through everything. Saved many lives, never com-

plained in hunger and thirst, wrapped naked people in his spare cloth
lead, showed them what to do, governed them, tended the sick, buri
and brought the poor survivors safely off at last! My dear, the poo
creatures all but worshipped him. They fell down at his feet, when
the land, and blessed him. The whole country rings with it. Stay
my bag of documents? I have got it there, and you shall read it, you sh

And I *did* read all the noble history; though very slowly and impe
for my eyes were so dimmed that I could not see the words, and I cr
that I was many times obliged to lay down the long account she had c
newspaper. I felt so triumphant ever to have known the man who ha
generous and gallant deeds; I felt such glowing exultation in his re
admired and loved what he had done; that I envied the storm-worn
had fallen at his feet and blessed him as their preserver. I could
kneeled down then, so far away, and blessed him, in my rapture that h
so truly good and brave. I felt that no one—mother, sister, wife—c
him more than I. I did, indeed!

My poor little visitor made me a present of the account, and w
evening began to close in, she rose to take her leave, lest she shou
coach by which she was to return, she was still full of the shipwreck,
not yet sufficiently composed myself to understand in all its details.

"My dear," said she, as she carefully folded up her scarf and gloves,
physician ought to have a Title bestowed upon him. And no do
You are of that opinion?"

That he well deserved one, yes. That he would ever have one, no.

"Why not, Fitz-Jarndyce?" she asked, rather sharply.

I said it was not the custom in England to confer titles on men disti
peaceful services, however good and great; unless occasionally, wh
sisted of the accumulation of some very large amount of money.

"Why, good gracious," said Miss Flite, "how can you say that?
know, my dear, that all the greatest ornaments of England in knowled
tion, active humanity, and improvement of every sort, are added to
Look round you, my dear, and consider. *You* must be rambling a
think, if you don't know that this is the great reason why titles will al
the land!"

I am afraid she believed what she said; for there were moments w
very mad indeed.

And now I must part with the little secret I have thus far tried to k
thought, sometimes, that Mr. Woodcourt loved me; and that if h
richer, he would perhaps have told me that he loved me, before he w
had thought, sometimes, that if he had done so, I should have bee
But, how much better it was now, that this had never happened!
I have suffered, if I had had to write to him, and tell him that the
had known as mine was quite gone from me, and that I freely releas
his bondage to one whom he had never seen!

O, it was so much better, as it was! With a great pang mercifull
I could take back to my heart my childish prayer to be all he had
shown himself; and there was nothing to be undone: no chain for
or for him to drag; and I could go, please God, my lowly way alon
duty, and he could go his nobler way upon its broader road; and the
apart upon the journey, I might aspire to meet him, unselfishly,
better far than he had thought me when I found some favour in his
journey's end.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

CHESNEY WOLD.

and I did not set off alone upon our expedition into Lincolnshire. My had made up his mind not to lose sight of me until I was safe in Mr. 's house; so he accompanied us, and we were two days upon the road. every breath of air, and every scent, and every flower and leaf and blade and every passing cloud, and everything in nature, more beautiful and il to me than I had ever found it yet. This was my first gain from my How little I had lost, when the wide world was so full of delight for me. uardian intending to go back immediately, we appointed, on our way day when my dear girl should come. I wrote her a letter, of which he rge; and he left us within half an hour of our arrival at our destination, ghtful evening in the early summer time.

ood fairy had built the house for me with a wave of her wand, and I had rincess and her favoured godchild, I could not have been more considered o many preparations were made for me, and such an endearing remem- as shown of all my little tastes and likings, that I could have sat down, e, a dozen times, before I had revisited half the rooms. I did better than wever, by showing them all to Charley instead. Charley's delight calmed nd after we had had a walk in the garden, and Charley had exhausted her ocabulary of admiring expressions, I was as tranquilly happy as I ought to n. It was a great comfort to be able to say to myself after tea, "Esther, , I think you are quite sensible enough to sit down now, and write a note of your host." He had left a note of welcome for me, as sunny as his own face, confided his bird to my care, which I knew to be his highest mark of con- Accordingly I wrote a little note to him in London, telling him how all his plants and trees were looking, and how the most astonishing of birds had the honours of the house to me in the most hospitable manner, and how, ging on my shoulder, to the inconceivable rapture of my little maid, he at roost in the usual corner of his cage, but whether dreaming or no I t report. My note finished and sent off to the post, I made myself very unpacking and arranging; and I sent Charley to bed in good time, and I should want her no more that night.

had not yet looked in the glass, and had never asked to have my own to me. I knew this to be a weakness which must be overcome; but I ays said to myself that I would begin afresh, when I got to where I now herefore I had wanted to be alone, and therefore I said, now alone, in my m, "Esther, if you are to be happy, if you are to have any right to pray e-hearted, you must keep your word, my dear." I was quite resolved to but I sat down for a little while first, to reflect upon all my blessings. n I said my prayers, and thought a little more.

ir had not been cut off, though it had been in danger more than once. It g and thick. I let it down, and shook it out, and went up to the glass e dressing-table. There was a little muslin curtain drawn across it. I back: and stood for a moment looking through such a veil of my own t I could see nothing else. Then I put my hair aside, and looked at the n in the mirror; encouraged by seeing how placidly it looked at me. I much changed—O very, very much. At first, my face was so strange to I think I should have put my hands before it and started back, but for urgement I have mentioned. Very soon it became more familiar, and

then I knew the extent of the alteration in it better than I had done a
was not like what I had expected; but I had expected nothing defin
dare say anything definite would have surprised me.

I had never been a beauty, and had never thought myself one; but I
very different from this. It was all gone now. Heaven was so good t
I could let it go with a few not bitter tears, and could stand there and
hair for the night quite thankfully.

One thing troubled me, and I considered it for a long time before
sleep. I had kept Mr. Woodcourt's flowers. When they were withe
dried them, and put them in a book that I was fond of. Nobody knew
even Ada. I was doubtful whether I had a right to preserve what he h
one so different—whether it was generous towards him to do it. I wi
generous to him, even in the secret depths of my heart, which he wo
know, because I could have loved him—could have been devoted to him
I came to the conclusion that I might keep them; if I treasured them
remembrance of what was irrevocably past and gone, never to be looke
any more, in any other light. I hope this may not seem trivial. I was
in earnest.

I took care to be up early in the morning, and to be before the g
Charley came in on tiptoe.

"Dear, dear, miss!" cried Charley, starting. "Is that you?"

"Yes, Charley," said I, quietly putting up my hair. "And I am
indeed, and very happy."

I saw it was a weight off Charley's mind, but it was a greater weight
I knew the worst now, and was composed to it. I shall not conceal, t
the weaknesses I could not quite conquer; but they always passed from
and the happier frame of mind stayed by me faithfully.

Wishing to be fully re-established in my strength and my good spi
Ada came, I now laid down a little series of plans with Charley for h
fresh air all day long. We were to be out before breakfast, and we
early, and were to be out again before and after dinner, and were to
garden after tea, and were to go to rest betimes, and were to climb eve
explore every road, lane, and field in the neighbourhood. As to restin
strengthening delicacies, Mr. Boythorn's good housekeeper was for ev
about with something to eat or drink in her hand; I could not even b
as resting in the park, but she would come trotting after me with a
cheerful face shining with a lecture on the importance of frequent no
Then there was a pony expressly for my riding, a chubby pony, with a
and a mane all over his eyes, who could canter—when he would—so
quietly, that he was a treasure. In a very few days, he would come t
paddock when I called him, and eat out of my hand, and follow me al
arrived at such a capital understanding, that when he was jogging with
and rather obstinately, down some shady lane, if I patted his neck,
"Stubbs, I am surprised you don't canter when you know how muc
and I think you might oblige me, for you are only getting stupid an
sleep," he would give his head a comical shake or two, and set off direc
Charley would stand still and laugh with such enjoyment, that her la
like music. I don't know who had given Stubbs his name, but it
belong to him as naturally as his rough coat. Once we put him in a la
and drove him triumphantly through the green lanes for five miles;
once, as we were extolling him to the skies, he seemed to take it ill that
have been accompanied so far by the circle of tantalising little gnats
been hovering round and round his ears the whole way without sp

inch; and stopped to think about it. I suppose he came to the
at it was not to be borne; for he steadily refused to move, until I gave
Charley and got out and walked; when he followed me with a sturdy
l humour, putting his head under my arm, and rubbing his ear against
It was in vain for me to say, "Now, Stubbs, I feel quite sure from
w of you, that you will go on if I ride a little while;" for the moment
he stood stock still again. Consequently I was obliged to lead the
ore; and in this order we returned home, to the great delight of the

nd I had reason to call it the most friendly of villages, I am sure; for
time the people were so glad to see us go by, though ever so fre-
the course of a day, that there were faces of greeting in every cottage.
n many of the grown people before, and almost all the children; but
ry steeple began to wear a familiar and affectionate look. Among my
was an old old woman who lived in such a little thatched and white-
elling, that when the outside shutter was turned up on its hinges, it
whole house-front. This old lady had a grandson who was a sailor;
a letter to him for her, and drew at the top of it the chimney-corner
e had brought him up, and where his old stool yet occupied its old
is was considered by the whole village the most wonderful achievement
d; but when an answer came back all the way from Plymouth, in which
ed that he was going to take the picture all the way to America, and
ica would write again, I got all the credit that ought to have been given
-office, and was invested with the merit of the whole system.
at with being so much in the air, playing with so many children, gos-
so many people, sitting on invitation in so many cottages, going on
y's education, and writing long letters to Ada every day, I had scarcely
think about that little loss of mine, and was almost always cheerful.
nk of it at odd moments now and then, I had only to be busy and
I felt it more than I had hoped I should, once, when a child said
why is the lady not a pretty lady now, like she used to be?" But when
child was not less fond of me, and drew its soft hand over my face
of pitying protection in its touch, that soon set me up again. There
little occurrences which suggested to me, with great consolation, how
to gentle hearts to be considerate and delicate towards any inferiority.
e particularly touched me. I happened to stroll into the little church
rriage was just concluded, and the young couple had to sign the register.
egroom, to whom the pen was handed first, made a rude cross for his
bride, who came next, did the same. Now, I had known the bride
last there, not only as the prettiest girl in the place, but as having
guished herself in the school; and I could not help looking at her with
se. She came aside and whispered to me, while tears of honest love
tion stood in her bright eyes, "He's a dear good fellow, miss; but he
yet—he's going to learn of me—and I wouldn't shame him for the
hy, what had I to fear, I thought, when there was this nobility in the
bouring man's daughter!
blew as freshly and revivingly upon me as it had ever blown, and the
our came into my new face as it had come into my old one. Charley was
o see, she was so radiant and so rosy; and we both enjoyed the whole
ept soundly the whole night.
is a favourite spot of mine in the park-woods of Chesney Wold, where
been erected commanding a lovely view. The wood had been cleared
, to improve this point of sight; and the bright sunny landscape beyond,

was so beautiful that I rested there at least once every day. A pictures
the Hall, called the Ghost's Walk, was seen to advantage from this high
and the startling name, and the old legend in the Dedlock family w
heard from Mr. Boythorn, accounting for it, mingled with the view a
something of a mysterious interest, in addition to its real charms. T
bank here, too, which was a famous one for violets; and as it was a d
of Charley's to gather wild flowers, she took as much to the spot as I d

It would be idle to inquire now why I never went close to the hous
went inside it. The family were not there, I had heard on my arrival,
not expected. I was far from being incurious or uninterested about the
on the contrary, I often sat in this place, wondering how the rooms r
whether any echo like a footstep really did resound at times, as the
upon the lonely Ghost's Walk. The indefinable feeling with which La
had impressed me, may have had some influence in keeping me from
even when she was absent. I am not sure. Her face and figure were
with it, naturally; but I cannot say that they repelled me from it, tho
thing did. For whatever reason or no reason, I had never once gone ne
to the day at which my story now arrives.

I was resting at my favourite point, after a long ramble, and Ch
gathering violets at a little distance from me. I had been looking at t
Walk lying in a deep shade of masonry afar off, and picturing to myself
shape that was said to haunt it, when I became aware of a figure ap
through the wood. The perspective was so long, and so darkened by
the shadows of the branches on the ground made it so much more intri
eye, that at first I could not discern what figure it was. By little an
revealed itself to be a woman's—a lady's—Lady Dedlock's. She was
coming to where I sat with a much quicker step, I observed to my sur
was usual with her.

I was fluttered by her being unexpectedly so near (she was almost wit
ing distance before I knew her), and would have risen to continue my w
I could not. I was rendered motionless. Not so much by her hurried
entreaty, not so much by her quick advance and outstretched hands, no
by the great change in her manner, and the absence of her haughty sel
as by a something in her face that I had pined for and dreamed of wh
little child; something I had never seen in any face; something I had
in hers before.

A dread and faintness fell upon me, and I called to Charley. La
stopped, upon the instant, and changed back almost to what I had kno

"Miss Summerson, I am afraid I have startled you," she said, now
slowly. "You can scarcely be strong yet. You have been very ill, I
have been much concerned to hear it."

I could no more have removed my eyes from her pale face, than I c
stirred from the bench on which I sat. She gave me her hand; and
coldness, so at variance with the enforced composure of her features, de
fascination that overpowered me. I cannot say what was in my whirling

"You are recovering again?" she asked kindly.

"I was quite well but a moment ago, Lady Dedlock."

"Is this your young attendant?"

"Yes."

"Will you send her on before, and walk towards your house with me

"Charley," said I, "take your flowers home, and I will follow you d
Charley, with her best curtsey, blushingly tied on her bonnet, and we
When she was gone, Lady Dedlock sat down on the seat beside me.

nnot tell in any words what the state of my mind was, when I saw in her ny handkerchief, with which I had covered the dead baby.

oked at her; but I could not see her, I could not hear her, I could not draw eath. The beating of my heart was so violent and wild, that I felt as if my re breaking from me. But when she caught me to her breast, kissed me, ver me, compassionated me, and called me back to myself; when she fell on her knees and cried to me, "O my child, my child, I am your wicked ihappy mother! O try to forgive me!"—when I saw her at my feet on the arth in her great agony of mind, I felt, through all my tumult of emotion, a of gratitude to the providence of God that I was so changed as that I never disgrace her by any trace of likeness; as that nobody could ever now look and look at her, and remotely think of any near tie between us.

ised my mother up, praying and beseeching her not to stoop before me in ffliction and humiliation. I did so, in broken incoherent words; for, besides uble I was in, it frightened me to see her at *my* feet. I told her—or I tried her—that if it were for me, her child, under any circumstances to take upon forgive her, I did it, and had done it, many, many years. I told her that art overflowed with love for her; that it was natural love, which nothing in st had changed, or could change. That it was not for me, then resting for st time on my mother's bosom, to take her to account for having given me ut that my duty was to bless her and receive her, though the whole world l from her, and that I only asked her leave to do it. I held my mother in ibrace, and she held me in hers; and among the still woods in the silence summer day, there seemed to be nothing but our two troubled minds that ot at peace.

o bless and receive me," groaned my mother, "it is far too late. I must my dark road alone, and it will lead me where it will. From day to day, imes from hour to hour, I do not see the way before my guilty feet. This is rthly punishment I have brought upon myself. I bear it, and I hide it."

n in the thinking of her endurance, she drew her habitual air of proud indif- e about her like a veil, though she soon cast it off again.

must keep this secret, if by any means it can be kept, not wholly for myself, a husband, wretched and dishonouring creature that I am!"

se words she uttered with a suppressed cry of despair, more terrible in its than any shriek. Covering her face with her hands, she shrunk down in my ce as if she were unwilling that I should touch her; nor could I, by my t persuasions, or by any endearments I could use, prevail upon her to rise. aid, No, no, no, she could only speak to me so; she must be proud and nful everywhere else; she would be humbled and ashamed there, in the only l moments of her life.

unhappy mother told me that in my illness she had been nearly frantic. ad but then known that her child was living. She could not have suspected be that child before. She had followed me down here, to speak to me but in all her life. We never could associate, never could communicate, never bly from that time forth could interchange another word, on earth. She put ny hands a letter she had written for my reading only; and said, when I had t, and destroyed it but not so much for her sake, since she asked nothing, her husband's and my own—I must evermore consider her as dead. If I believe that she loved me, in this agony in which I saw her, with a mother's she asked me to do that; for then I might think of her with a greater pity, ning what she suffered. She had put herself beyond all hope, and beyond lp. Whether she preserved her secret until death, or it came to be dis- d and she brought dishonour and disgrace upon the name she had taken, it

was her solitary struggle always; and no affection could come near he human creature could render her any aid.

"But is the secret safe so far?" I asked. "Is it safe now, dearest m

"No," replied my mother. "It has been very near discovery. It wa an accident. It may be lost by another accident—to-morrow, any day."

"Do you dread a particular person?"

"Hush! Do not tremble and cry so much for me. I am not worth tears," said my mother, kissing my hands. "I dread one person very m

"An enemy?"

"Not a friend. One who is too passionless to be either. He is Sir Dedlock's lawyer; mechanically faithful without attachment, and very the profit, privilege, and reputation of being master of the mysteries houses."

"Has he any suspicions?"

"Many."

"Not of you?" I said alarmed.

"Yes! He is always vigilant, and always near me. I may keep him still, but I can never shake him off."

"Has he so little pity or compunction?"

"He has none, and no anger. He is indifferent to everything but hi His calling is the acquisition of secrets, and the holding possession of su as they give him, with no sharer or opponent in it."

"Could you trust in him?"

"I shall never try. The dark road I have trodden for so many year where it will. I follow it alone to the end, whatever the end be. It ma it may be distant; while the road lasts, nothing turns me."

"Dear mother, are you so resolved?"

"I *am* resolved. I have long outbidden folly with folly, pride with pr with scorn, insolence with insolence, and have outlived many vanities w more. I will outlive this danger, and outdie it, if I can. It has clos me, almost as awfully as if these woods of Chesney Wold had closed a house; but my course through it is the same. I have but one; I can have

"Mr. Jarndyce—" I was beginning, when my mother hurriedly inqui

"Does *he* suspect?"

"No," said I. "No, indeed! Be assured that he does not!" And what he had related to me as his knowledge of my story. "But he is so sensible," said I, "that perhaps if he knew——"

My mother, who until this time had made no change in her position, hand up to my lips, and stopped me.

"Confide fully in him," she said, after a little while. "You have my sent—a small gift from such a mother to her injured child!—but do not it. Some pride is left in me, even yet."

I explained, as nearly as I could then, or can recall now—for my agit distress throughout were so great that I scarcely understood myself, tho word that was uttered in the mother's voice, so unfamiliar and so melt me; which in my childhood I had never learned to love and recognise, been sung to sleep with, had never heard a blessing from, had never b inspired by; made an enduring impression on my memory—I say I exp tried to do it, how I had only hoped that Mr. Jarndyce, who had been t fathers to me, might be able to afford some counsel and support to her. mother answered no, it was impossible; no one could help her. Th desert that lay before her, she must go alone.

"My child, my child!" she said. "For the last time! These kis

me! These arms upon my neck for the last time! We shall meet no more. ope to do what I seek to do, I must be what I have been so long. Such is ward and doom. If you hear of Lady Dedlock, brilliant, prosperous, and ed; think of your wretched mother, conscience-stricken, underneath that ! Think that the reality is in her suffering, in her useless remorse, in her ring within her breast the only love and truth of which it is capable! And forgive her, if you can; and cry to Heaven to forgive her, which it never "

e held one another for a little space yet, but she was so firm, that she took ands away, and put them back against my breast, and, with a last kiss as she them there, released them, and went from me into the wood. I was alone; calm and quiet below me in the sun and shade, lay the old house, with its es and turrets, on which there had seemed to me to be such complete repose I first saw it, but which now looked like the obdurate and unpitying watcher r mother's misery.

mned as I was, as weak and helpless at first as I had ever been in my sick ber, the necessity of guarding against the danger of discovery, or even of the test suspicion, did me service. I took such precautions as I could to hide Charley that I had been crying; and I constrained myself to think of every d obligation that there was upon me to be careful and collected. It was not e while before I could succeed, or could even restrain bursts of grief; but an hour or so, I was better, and felt that I might return. I went home very y, and told Charley, whom I found at the gate looking for me, that I had tempted to extend my walk after Lady Dedlock had left me, and that I was tired, and would lie down. Safe in my own room, I read the letter. I y derived from it—and that was much then—that I had not been abandoned y mother. Her elder and only sister, the godmother of my childhood, dis- ing signs of life in me when I had been laid aside as dead, had in her stern of duty, with no desire or willingness that I should live, reared me in rigid cy, and had never again beheld my mother's face from within a few hours of irth. So strangely did I hold my place in this world, that, until within a time back, I had never, to my own mother's knowledge, breathed—had been d—had never been endowed with life—had never borne a name. When she irst seen me in the church, she had been startled; and had thought of what I have been like me, if it had ever lived, and had lived on; but that was all,

hat more the letter told me, needs not to be repeated here. It has its own and places in my story.

first care was to burn what my mother had written, and to consume even its . I hope it may not appear very unnatural or bad in me, that I then became y sorrowful to think I had ever been reared. That I felt as if I knew it would been better and happier for many people, if indeed I had never breathed. I had a terror of myself, as the danger and the possible disgrace of my own er, and of a proud family name. That I was so confused and shaken, as to assessed by a belief that it was right, and had been intended, that I should n my birth; and that it was wrong, and not intended, that I should be then

ese are the real feelings that I had. I fell asleep, worn out; and when I e, I cried afresh to think that I was back in the world, with my load of trouble hers. I was more than ever frightened of myself, thinking anew of her, t whom I was a witness; of the owner of Chesney Wold; of the new and le meaning of the old words, now moaning in my ear like a surge upon the "Your mother, Esther, was your disgrace, and you are hers. The time

Perhaps I might not have gone near it, if I had been in a stronger
As it was, I took the path that led close by it.

I did not dare to linger or to look up, but I passed before the
with its fragrant odours, and its broad walks, and its well-kept be
turf; and I saw how beautiful and grave it was, and how the old st
and parapets, and wide flights of shallow steps, were seamed by tim
and how the trained moss and ivy grew about them, and around
pedestal of the sun-dial; and I heard the fountain falling. Then t
long lines of dark windows, diversified by turreted towers, and por
tric shapes, where old stone lions and grotesque monsters bristled
shadow, and snarled at the evening gloom over the escutcheons th
grip. Thence the path wound underneath a gateway, and throu
where the principal entrance was (I hurried quickly on), and by th
none but deep voices seemed to be, whether in the murmuring of t
the strong mass of ivy holding to a high red wall, or in the low coo
weathercock, or in the barking of the dogs, or in the slow striking
encountering presently a sweet smell of limes, whose rustling I coul
with the turning of the path, to the south front; and there, abov
balustrades of the Ghost's Walk, and one lighted window that
mother's.

The way was paved here, like the terrace overhead, and my foots
noiseless made an echoing sound upon the flags. Stopping to l
but seeing all I did see as I went, I was passing quickly on, and in
should have passed the lighted window, when my echoing foots
suddenly into my mind that there was a dreadful truth in the legen
Walk; that it was I, who was to bring calamity upon the stately h
my warning feet were haunting it even then. Seized with an augu
myself which turned me cold, I ran from myself and everything, r
by which I had come, and never paused until I had gained the
the park lay sullen and black behind me.

Not before I was alone in my own room for the night, and l
dejected and unhappy there, did I begin to know how wrong and
state was. But from my darling who was coming on the mor
joyful letter, full of such loving anticipation that I must have been
had not moved me: from my guardian, too, I found another lette

have lived; not to say should never have been reserved for such a happy
I saw very well how many things had worked together, for my welfare;
at if the sins of the fathers were sometimes visited upon the children, the
: did not mean what I had in the morning feared it meant. I knew I was as
nt of my birth as a queen of hers; and that before my Heavenly Father I
l not be punished for birth, nor a queen rewarded for it. I had had
ence, in the shock of that very day, that I could, even thus soon, find
rting reconcilements to the change that had fallen on me. I renewed my
tions, and prayed to be strengthened in them; pouring out my heart for
f, and for my unhappy mother, and feeling that the darkness of the morning
assing away. It was not upon my sleep; and when the next day's light
: me, it was gone.

dear girl was to arrive at five o'clock in the afternoon. How to help
f through the intermediate time better than by taking a long walk along the
y which she was to come, I did not know; so Charley and I and Stubbs—
s, saddled, for we never drove him after the one great occasion—made a
expedition along that road, and back. On our return, we held a great
: of the house and garden; and saw that everything was in its prettiest
ion, and had the bird out ready as an important part of the establishment.
re were more than two full hours yet to elapse, before she could come; and
t interval, which seemed a long one, I must confess I was nervously anxious
my altered looks. I loved my darling so well that I was more concerned
eir effect on her than on any one. I was not in this slight distress because I
repined—I am quite certain I did not, that day—but, I thought, would she
olly prepared? When she first saw me, might she not be a little shocked
isappointed? Might it not prove a little worse than she expected? Might
ot look for her old Esther, and not find her? Might she not have to grow
o me, and to begin all over again?

new the various expressions of my sweet girl's face so well, and it was such
nest face in its loveliness, that I was sure, beforehand, she could not hide
rst look from me. And I considered whether, if it should signify any one
se meanings, which was so very likely, could I quite answer for myself?
ll, I thought I could. After last night, I thought I could. But to wait
ait, and expect and expect, and think and think, was such bad preparation,
resolved to go along the road again, and meet her.

I said to Charley, "Charley, I will go by myself and walk along the road until
mes." Charley highly approving of anything that pleased me, I went, and
r at home.

: before I got to the second milestone, I had been in so many palpitations
seeing dust in the distance (though I knew it was not, and could not, be the
yet), that I resolved to turn back and go home again. And when I had
l, I was in such fear of the coach coming up behind me (though I still knew
: neither would, nor could, do any such thing), that I ran the greater part of
ay, to avoid being overtaken.

n, I considered, when I had got safe back again, this was a nice thing to
lone! Now I was hot, and had made the worst of it, instead of the best.

last, when I believed there was at least a quarter of an hour more yet,
y all at once cried out to me as I was trembling in the garden, "Here she
, miss! Here she is!"

id not mean to do it, but I ran up-stairs into my room, and hid myself
l the door. There I stood trembling, even when I heard my darling calling
e came up-stairs. "Esther, my dear, my love, where are you? Little
n, dear Dame Durden!"

CHAPTER XXXVII.

[illegible]

[illegible] I [illegible] have [illegible] it t
[illegible] it was not mine; and I did not [illegible]
[illegible] guardian, unless some great emergen
[illegible] still my present duty appeared to b
[illegible] my dear, I did not want an impulse an
[illegible] when she was asleep, and all w
[illegible] kept me waking, and made the night so
[illegible] and Ada found me what I used to h
[illegible] I have said enough, and which I h
[illegible] just now, if I can help it.

[illegible] quite composed that first evenin
[illegible] the family were at the house, and
[illegible] for Lady Dedlock had spoken
[illegible] great. Greater still, when A
[illegible] that she had been kind an
[illegible] her beauty and elegance, remark
[illegible] as chilling air. But Charley helped
[illegible] Lady Dedlock had only stayed at th
[illegible] to visit at some other great hous
[illegible] early in the morning after we had se
[illegible] the adage about little pitchers
[illegible] in a day, than would have

[illegible] Mr. [illegible]. My pet had scarce
[illegible] the time, when one evening after we
[illegible] flowers, and just as the candles
[illegible] important air behind Ada's chair, l
[illegible]

[illegible] said Charley in a whisper, with her

"And how do you come to be the messenger, Charley?"

"I am not the messenger, if you please, miss," returned my little maid. "It was W. Grubble, miss."

"And who is W. Grubble, Charley?"

"Mister Grubble, miss," returned Charley. "Don't you know, miss? The Dedlock Arms, by W. Grubble," which Charley delivered as if she were slowly spelling out the sign.

"Aye? The landlord, Charley?"

"Yes, miss. If you please, miss, his wife is a beautiful woman, but she broke her ankle, and it never joined. And her brother's the sawyer, that was put in the cage, miss, and they expect he'll drink himself to death entirely on beer," said Charley.

Not knowing what might be the matter, and being easily apprehensive now, I thought it best to go to this place by myself. I bade Charley be quick with my bonnet and veil, and my shawl; and having put them on, went away down the little hilly street, where I was as much at home as in Mr. Boythorn's garden.

Mr. Grubble was standing in his shirt sleeves at the door of his very clean little tavern, waiting for me. He lifted off his hat with both hands when he saw me coming, and carrying it so, as if it were an iron vessel (it looked as heavy), preceded me along the sanded passage to his best parlour: a neat carpeted room, with more plants in it than were quite convenient, a coloured print of Queen Caroline, several shells, a good many tea-trays, two stuffed and dried fish in glass cases, and either a curious egg or a curious pumpkin (but I don't know which, and I doubt if many people did) hanging from his ceiling. I knew Mr. Grubble very well by sight, from his often standing at his door. A pleasant-looking, stoutish, middle-aged man, who never seemed to consider himself cozily dressed for his own fireside without his hat and top-boots, but who never wore a coat except at church.

He snuffed the candle, and backing away a little to see how it looked, backed out of the room—unexpectedly to me, for I was going to ask him by whom he had been sent. The door of the opposite parlour being then opened, I heard some voices, familiar in my ears I thought, which stopped. A quick light step approached the room in which I was, and who should stand before me but Richard!

"My dear Esther!" he said, "my best friend!" and he really was so warm-hearted and earnest, that in the first surprise and pleasure of his brotherly greeting I could scarcely find breath to tell him that Ada was well.

"Answering my very thoughts—always the same dear girl!" said Richard, leading me to a chair, and seating himself beside me.

I put my veil up, but not quite.

"Always the same dear girl!" said Richard, just as heartily as before.

I put up my veil altogether, and laying my hand on Richard's sleeve, and looking in his face, told him how much I thanked him for his kind welcome, and how greatly I rejoiced to see him; the more so, because of the determination I had made in my illness, which I now conveyed to him.

"My love," said Richard, "there is no one with whom I would rather talk than you, for I want you to understand me."

"And I want you, Richard," said I, shaking my head, "to understand some one else."

"Since you refer so immediately to John Jarndyce," said Richard,—"I suppose you mean him?"

"Of course I do."

"Then I may say at once that I am glad of it, because it is on that subject

that I am anxious to be understood. By you, mind—you, my dear! I a accountable to Mr. Jarndyce, or Mr. Anybody."

I was pained to find him taking this tone, and he observed it.

"Well, well, my dear," said Richard, "we won't go into that now. I to appear quietly in your country house here, with you under my arm, as my charming cousin a surprise. I suppose your loyalty to John Jarndyc allow that?"

"My dear Richard," I returned, "you know you would be heartily w at his house—your home, if you will but consider it so; and you are as h welcome here!"

"Spoken like the best of little women!" cried Richard, gaily.

I asked him how he liked his profession?

"Oh, I like it well enough!" said Richard. "It's all right. It does as anything else, for a time. I don't know that I shall care about it when I to be settled; but I can sell out then, and—however, never mind all that ation at present."

So young and handsome, and in all respects so perfectly the opposite o Flite! And yet, in the clouded, eager, seeking look that passed over h dreadfully like her!

"I am in town on leave, just now," said Richard.

"Indeed?"

"Yes. I have run over to look after my—my Chancery interests, bei long vacation," said Richard, forcing a careless laugh. "We are begun spin along with that old suit at last, I promise you."

No wonder that I shook my head!

"As you say, it's not a pleasant subject." Richard spoke with the same crossing his face as before. "Let it go to the four winds for to-night. Gone!—Who do you suppose is with me?"

"Was it Mr. Skimpole's voice I heard?"

"That's the man! He does me more good than anybody. What a fasc child it is?"

I asked Richard if any one knew of their coming down together. He ans No, nobody. He had been to call upon the dear old infant—so he call Skimpole—and the dear old infant had told him where we were, and he h the dear old infant he was bent on coming to see us, and the dear old infa directly wanted to come too; and so he had brought him. "And he is w not to say his sordid expenses—but thrice his weight in gold," said R "He is such a cheery fellow. No worldliness about him. Fresh and hearted!"

I certainly did not see the proof of Mr. Skimpole's unworldliness in his his expenses paid by Richard; but I made no remark about that. Indeed, h in, and turned our conversation. He was charmed to see me; said he ha shedding delicious tears of joy and sympathy, at intervals for six weeks, account; had never been so happy as in hearing of my progress; began to stand the mixture of good and evil in the world now; felt that he appr health the more, when somebody else was ill; didn't know but what it mi in the scheme of things that A should squint to make B happier in h straight; or that C should carry a wooden leg, to make D better satisfied w flesh and blood in a silk stocking.

"My dear Miss Summerson, here is our friend Richard," said Mr. Ski "full of the brightest visions of the future, which he evokes out of the da of Chancery. Now that's delightful, that's inspiriting, that's full of poetry old times, the woods and solitudes were made joyous to the shepherd by th

ping and dancing of Pan and the Nymphs. This present shepherd, our Richard, brightens the dull Inns of Court by making Fortune and her rt through them to the melodious notes of a judgment from the bench. ry pleasant you know! Some ill-conditioned growling fellow may say to hat's the use of these legal and equitable abuses? How do you defend I reply, 'My growling friend, I *don't* defend them, but they are very e to me. There is a shepherd-youth, a friend of mine, who transmutes o something highly fascinating to my simplicity. I don't say it is for this exist—for I am a child among you worldly grumblers, and not called account to you or myself for anything—but it may be so.'"

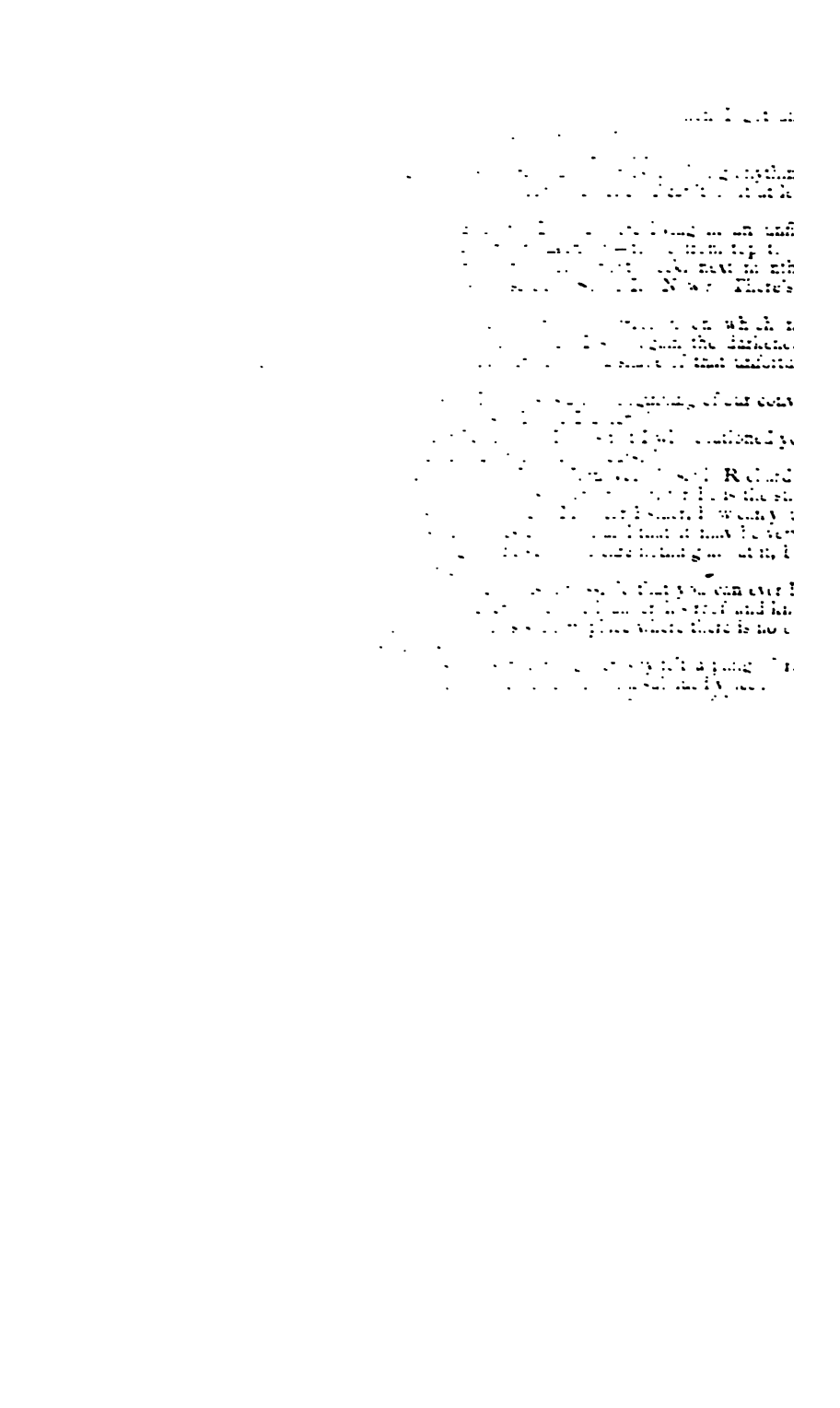
an seriously to think that Richard could scarcely have found a worse an this. It made me uneasy that at such a time, when he most required ght principle and purpose, he should have this captivating looseness ing-off of everything, this airy dispensing with all principle and purpose, ow. I thought I could understand how such a nature as my guardian's, ed in the world, and forced to contemplate the miserable evasions and ns of the family misfortune, found an immense relief in Mr. Skimpole's of his weaknesses and display of guileless candour; but I could not yself that it was as artless as it seemed; or that it did not serve Mr. e's idle turn quite as well as any other part, and with less trouble.

both walked back with me; and Mr. Skimpole leaving us at the gate, d softly in with Richard, and said, "Ada, my love, I have brought a an to visit you." It was not difficult to read the blushing, startled face. d him dearly, and he knew it, and I knew it. It was a very transparent , that meeting as cousins only.

ost mistrusted myself, as growing quite wicked in my suspicions, but t so sure that Richard loved her dearly. He admired her very much— must have done that—and I dare say, would have renewed their engagement with great pride and ardour, but that he knew how she spect her promise to my guardian. Still, I had a tormenting idea that ence upon him extended even here: that he was postponing his best d earnestness, in this as in all things, until Jarndyce and Jarndyce should is mind. Ah me! what Richard would have been without that blight, I all know now!

d Ada, in his most ingenuous way, that he had not come to make any road on the terms she had accepted (rather too implicitly and confidingly, ht) from Mr. Jarndyce; that he had come openly to see her, and to see to justify himself for the present terms on which he stood with Mr. . As the dear old infant would be with us directly, he begged that make an appointment for the morning, when he might set himself right, the means of an unreserved conversation with me. I proposed to walk n in the park at seven o'clock, and this was arranged. Mr. Skimpole erwards appeared, and made us merry for an hour. He particularly d to see Little Coavinses (meaning Charley), and told her, with a al air, that he had given her late father all the business in his power; if one of her little brothers would make haste to get set-up in the same s, he hoped he should still be able to put a good deal of employment in

I am constantly being taken in these nets," said Mr. Skimpole, looking dy at us over a glass of wine-and-water, "and am constantly being hailed a boat. Or paid off—like a ship's company. Somebody always does . I can't do it, you know, for I never have any money. But Some- es it. I get out by Somebody's means; I am not like the starling; I get



ne at all events. If I have the misfortune to be under that influence,
. he. If it has a little twisted me, it may have a little twisted him, too.
't say that he is not an honourable man, out of all this complication and
ainty; I am sure he is. But it taints everybody. You know it taints
ody. You have heard him say so fifty times. Then why should *he*
:"

ecause," said I, "his is an uncommon character, and he has resolutely kept
lf outside the circle, Richard."

h, because and because!" replied Richard, in his vivacious way. "I am
re, my dear girl, but that it may be wise and specious to preserve that out-
ndifference. It may cause other parties interested to become lax about their
ts; and people may die off, and points may drag themselves out of memory,
any things may smoothly happen that are convenient enough."

s so touched with pity for Richard, that I could not reproach him any more,
y a look. I remembered my guardian's gentleness towards his errors, and
hat perfect freedom from resentment he had spoken of them.

ther," Richard resumed, "you are not to suppose that I have come here to
under-handed charges against John Jarndyce. I have only come to justify
. What I say is, it was all very well, and we got on very well, while I was
utterly regardless of this same suit: but as soon as I began to take an inte-
it, and to look into it, then it was quite another thing. Then John Jarn-
li-covers that Ada and I must break off, and that if I don't amend that very
ionable course, I am not fit for her. Now, Esther, I don't mean to amend
ry objectionable course: I will not hold John Jarndyce's favour on those un-
ms of compromise, which he has no right to dictate. Whether it pleases
displeases him, I must maintain my rights, and Ada's. I have been think-
out it a good deal, and this is the conclusion I have come to."

r dear Richard! He had indeed been thinking about it a good deal. His
is voice, his manner all showed that, too plainly.

o I tell him honourably (you are to know I have written to him about all this)
e are at issue, and that we had better be at issue openly than covertly. I
him for his good-will and his protection, and he goes his road, and I go
The fact is, our roads are not the same. Under one of the wills in dispute,
ll take much more than he. I don't mean to say that it is the one to be
shed; but there it is, and it has its chance."

have not to learn from you, my dear Richard," said I, "of your letter. I
ard of it already, without an offended or angry word."

deed?" replied Richard, softening. "I am glad I said he was an honour-
an, out of all this wretched affair. But I always say that, and have never
d it. Now, my dear Esther, I know these views of mine appear extremely
to you, and will to Ada when you tell her what has passed between us. But
had gone into the case as I have, if you had only applied yourself to the
as I did when I was at Kenge's, if you only knew what an accumulation of
s and counter-charges, and suspicions and cross-suspicions, they involve,
ould think me moderate in comparison."

rhaps so," said I. "But do you think that, among those many papers,
s much truth and justice, Richard?"

here is truth and justice somewhere in the case, Esther ——"

r was once, long ago," said I.

—is—must be somewhere," pursued Richard, impetuously, "and must be
t out. To allow Ada to be made a bribe and hush-money of, is not the
bring it out. You say the suit is changing me; John Jarndyce says it
es, has changed, *and will change*, everybody who has any share in it. Then

the greater right I have on my side, when I resolve to do all I can to bring it to an end."

"All you can, Richard! Do you think that in these many years no others have done all they could? Has the difficulty grown easier because of so many failures?"

"It can't last for ever," returned Richard, with a fierceness kindling in him which again presented to me that last sad reminder. "I am young and earnest; and energy and determination have done wonders many a time. Others have only half thrown themselves into it. I devote myself to it. I make it the object of my life."

"O, Richard, my dear, so much the worse, so much the worse!"

"No, no, no, don't you be afraid [illegible] e returned, affectionately. "You're a dear, good, wise, quiet, blessed girl [illegible] a have your prepossessions. So I come round to John Jarndyce. I tell [illegible] good Esther, when he and I were on those terms which he found so co[illegible] we were not on natural terms."

"Are division and animosity your [illegible] ms, Richard?"

"No, I don't say that. I mean [illegible] his business puts us on unnatural terms, with which natural relations [illegible] npatible. See another reason for urging it on! I may find out, when [illegible] hat I have been mistaken in John Jarndyce. My head may be clearer [illegible] n free of it, and I may then agree with what you say to-day. Very well [illegible] I shall acknowledge it, and make him reparation."

Everything postponed to that imaginary time! Everything held in confusion and indecision until then!

"Now, my best of confidantes," said Richard, "I want my cousin, Ada, to understand that I am not captious, fickle, and wilful, about John Jarndyce; but that I have this purpose and reason at my back. I wish to represent myself to her through you, because she has a great esteem and respect for her cousin John; and I know you will soften the course I take, even though you disapprove of it; and —and in short," said Richard, who had been hesitating through these words, "I —I don't like to represent myself in this litigious, contentious, doubting character, to a confiding girl like Ada."

I told him that he was more like himself in those latter words, than in anything he had said yet.

"Why," acknowledged Richard, "that may be true enough, my love. I rather feel it to be so. But I shall be able to give myself fair-play by-and-by. I shall come all right again, then, don't you be afraid."

I asked him if this were all he wished me to tell Ada?

"Not quite," said Richard. "I am bound not to withhold from her that John Jarndyce answered my letter in his usual manner, addressing me as 'My dear Rick,' trying to argue me out of my opinions, and telling me that they should make no difference in him. (All very well of course, but not altering the case.) I also want Ada to know, that if I see her seldom just now, I am looking after her interests as well as my own—we two being in the same boat exactly—and that I hope she will not suppose, from any flying rumours she may hear, that I am at all light-headed or imprudent; on the contrary, I am always looking forward to the termination of the suit, and always planning in that direction. Being of age now, and having taken the step I have taken, I consider myself free from any accountability to John Jarndyce; but Ada being still a ward of the Court, I don't yet ask her to renew our engagement. When she is free to act for herself, I shall be myself once more, and we shall both be in very different worldly circumstances, I believe. If you tell her all this with the advantage of your considerate way, you will do me a very great and a very kind service, my dear Esther; and I shall knock *Jarndyce* and Jarndyce on the head with greater vigour. Of course I ask for no secrecy at Bleak House."

"Richard," said I, "you place great confidence in me, but I fear you will not take advice from me?"

"It's impossible that I can on this subject, my dear girl. On any other, readily."

As if there were any other in his life! As if his whole career and character were not being dyed one colour!

"But I may ask you a question, Richard?"

"I think so," said he, laughing. "I don't know who may not, if you may not."

"You say, yourself, you are not leading a very settled life."

"How can I, my dear Esther, with nothing settled!"

"Are you in debt again?"

"Why of course I am," said Richard, astonished at my simplicity.

"Is it of course?"

"My dear child, certainly. I can't throw myself into an object so completely, without expense. You forget, or perhaps you don't know, that under either of the wills Ada and I take something. It's only a question between the larger sum and the smaller. I shall be within the mark any way. Bless your heart, my excellent girl," said Richard, quite amused with me, "I shall be all right! I shall pull through, my dear!"

I felt so deeply sensible of the danger in which he stood, that I tried, in Ada's name, in my guardian's, in my own, by every fervent means that I could think of, to warn him of it, and to show him some of his mistakes. He received everything I said, with patience and gentleness, but it all rebounded from him without taking the least effect. I could not wonder at this, after the reception his preoccupied mind had given to my guardian's letter; but I determined to try Ada's influence yet.

So, when our walk brought us round to the village again, and I went home to breakfast, I prepared Ada for the account I was going to give her, and told her exactly what reason we had to dread that Richard was losing himself, and scattering his whole life to the winds. It made her very unhappy, of course; though she had a far, far greater reliance on his correcting his errors than I could have—which was so natural and loving in my dear!—and she presently wrote him this little letter:

MY DEAREST COUSIN,

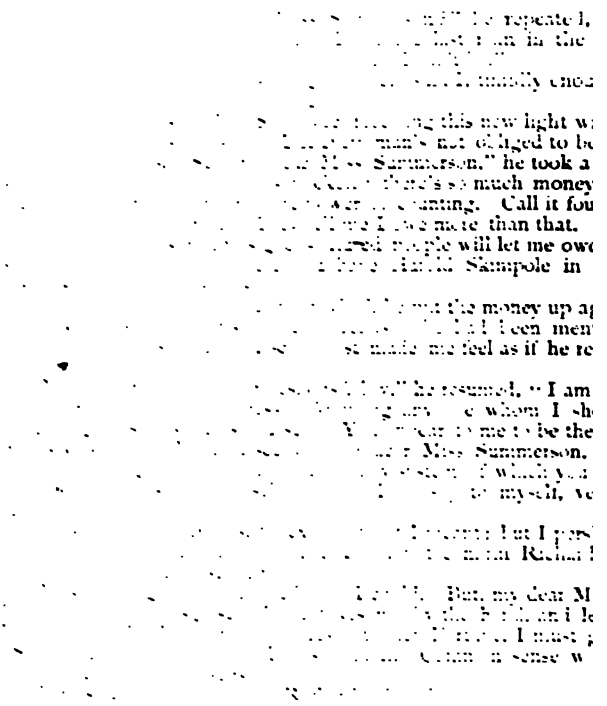
Esther has told me all you said to her this morning. I write this, to repeat most earnestly for myself all that she said to you, and to let you know how sure I am that you will sooner or later find our cousin John a pattern of truth, sincerity and goodness, when you will deeply deeply grieve to have done him (without intending it) so much wrong.

I do not quite know how to write what I wish to say next, but I trust you will understand it as I mean it. I have some fears, my dearest cousin, that it may be partly for my sake you are now laying up so much unhappiness for yourself—and, if for yourself, for me. In case this should be so, or in case you should entertain much thought of me in what you are doing, I most earnestly entreat and beg you to desist. You can do nothing for my sake that will make me half so happy, as for ever turning your back upon the shadow in which we both were born. Do not be angry with me for saying this. Pray, pray, dear Richard, for my sake, and for your own, and in a natural repugnance for that source of trouble which had its share in making us both orphans when we were very young, pray, pray, let it go for ever. We have reason to know, by this time, that there is no good in it, and no hope: that there is nothing to be got from it but sorrow.

My dearest cousin, it is needless for me to say that you are quite free, and that it is very likely you may find some one whom you will love much better than your first fancy. I am quite sure, if you will let me say so, that the object of your choice would greatly prefer to follow your fortunes far and wide, however moderate or poor, and see you happy, doing your duty and pursuing your chosen way; than to have the hope of being, or even to be, very rich with you (if such a thing were possible), at the cost of dragging years of procrastination and anxiety, and of your indifference to other aims. You may wonder at my saying this so confidently with so little knowledge or experience, but I know it for a certainty from my own heart.

Ever, my dearest cousin, Your most affectionate,

ADA.



literal prosaic way, that he sees no such thing; shows him it's nothing but fees, fraud, horsehair wigs, and black gowns. Now you know that's a painful change; —sensible in the last degree, I have no doubt, but disagreeable. *I* can't do it. I haven't got the ruled account-book, I have none of the tax-gathering elements in my composition, I am not at all respectable, and I don't want to be. Odd perhaps, but so it is!"

It was idle to say more; so I proposed that we should join Ada and Richard, who were a little in advance, and I gave up Mr. Skimpole in despair. He had been over the Hall in the course of the morning, and whimsically described the family pictures as we walked. There were such portentous shepherdesses among the Ladies Dedlock dead and gone, he told us, that peaceful crooks became weapons of assault in their hands. They tended their flocks severely in buckram and powder, and put their sticking-plaster patches on to terrify commoners, as the chiefs of some other tribes put on their war-paint. There was a Sir Somebody Dedlock, with a battle, a sprung-mine, volumes of smoke, flashes of lightning, a town on fire, and a stormed fort, all in full action between his horse's two hind legs; showing, he supposed, how little a Dedlock made of such trifles. The whole race he represented as having evidently been, in life, what he called "stuffed people,"—a large collection, glassy eyed, set up in the most approved manner on their various twigs and perches, very correct, perfectly free from animation, and always in glass cases.

I was not so easy now, during any reference to the name, but that I felt it a relief when Richard, with an exclamation of surprise, hurried away to meet a stranger, whom he first descried coming slowly towards us.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Skimpole. "Vholes!"

We asked if that were a friend of Richard's?

"Friend and legal adviser," said Mr. Skimpole. "Now, my dear Miss Summerson, if you want common sense, responsibility, and respectability, all united—if you want an exemplary man Vholes is *the* man."

We had not known, we said, that Richard was assisted by any gentleman of that name.

"When he emerged from legal infancy," returned Mr. Skimpole, "he parted from our conversational friend Kenge, and took up, I believe, with Vholes. Indeed, I know he did, because I introduced him to Vholes."

"Had you known him long?" asked Ada.

"Vholes? My dear Miss Clare, I had had that kind of acquaintance with him which I have had with several gentlemen of his profession. He had done something or other, in a very agreeable, civil manner—taken proceedings, I think, is the expression—which ended in the proceeding of his taking *me*. Somebody was so good as to step in and pay the money—something and fourpence was the amount; I forget the pounds and shillings, but I know it ended with fourpence, because it struck me at the time as being so odd that I could owe anybody fourpence—and after that, I brought them together. Vholes asked me for the introduction, and I gave it. Now I come to think of it," he looked inquiringly at us with his frankest smile as he made the discovery, "Vholes bribed me, perhaps? He gave me something, and called it commission. Was it a five-pound note? Do you know, I think it *must* have been a five-pound note!"

His further consideration of the point was prevented by Richard's coming back to us in an excited state, and hastily representing Mr. Vholes—a sallow man with pinched lips that looked as if they were cold, a red eruption here and there upon his face, tall and thin, about fifty years of age, high-shouldered, and stooping. Dressed in black, black-gloved, and buttoned to the chin, there was nothing so remarkable in him as a lifeless manner, and a slow fixed way he had of looking at Richard.

g over Mr. Vholes's chair, whispered something in his ear. Mr. Vholes
aloud—or as nearly aloud I suppose as he had ever replied to anything—
will drive me, will you, air? It is all the same to me, sir. Anything you
I am quite at your service."
understood from what followed that Mr. Skimpole was to be left until the
ig to occupy the two places which had been already paid for. As Ada and
both in low spirits concerning Richard, and very sorry so to part with him,
de it as plain as we politely could that we should leave Mr. Skimpole to
dlock Arms, and retire when the night-travellers were gone.
ıard's high spirits carrying everything before them, we all went out together
top of the hill above the village, where he had ordered a gig to wait; and
we found a man with a lantern standing at the head of the gaunt pale horse
ıd been harnessed to it.
:ver shall forget those two seated side by side in the lantern's light;
d, all flush and fire and laughter, with the reins in his hand; Mr. Vholes,
till, black-gloved, and buttoned up, looking at him as if he were looking
prey and charming it. I have before me the whole picture of the warm
ight, the summer lightning, the dusty track of road closed in by hedgerows
igh trees, the gaunt pale horse with his ears pricked up, and the driving
t speed to Jarndyce and Jarndyce.
dear girl told me, that night, how Richard's being thereafter prosperous or
, befriended or deserted, could only make this difference to her, that the
ıe needed love from one unchanging heart, the more love that unchanging
would have to give him; how he thought of her through his present errors,
ıe would think of him at all times: never of herself, if she could devote
to him: never of her own delights, if she could minister to his.
she kept her word?
ık along the road before me, where the distance already shortens and the
's end is growing visible; and, true and good above the dead sea of the
:ry suit, and all the ashey fruit it cast ashore, I think I see my darling.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A STRUGGLE.

our time came for returning to Bleak House again, we were punctual to
, and were received with an overpowering welcome. I was perfectly re-
to health and strength; and finding my housekeeping keys laid ready for
ny room, rang myself in as if I had been a new year, with a merry little
"Once more, duty, duty, Esther," said I; "and if you are not overjoyed
t, more than cheerfully and contentedly, through anything and everything,
ght to be. That's all I have to say to *you*, my dear!"
first few mornings were mornings of so much bustle and business, devoted
settlements of accounts, such repeated journeys to and fro between the
:ry and all other parts of the house, so many re-arrangements of drawers
esses, and such a general new beginning altogether, that I had not a
it's leisure. But when these arrangements were completed, and everything
order, I paid a visit of a few hours to London, which something in the
had destroyed at Chesney Wold had induced me to decide upon in my
ind.

I made Caddy Jellyby—her maiden name was so natural to me that I called her by it—the pretext for this visit; and wrote her a note previously, the favour of her company on a little business expedition. Leaving early in the morning, I got to London by stage-coach in such good time, got to Newman Street with the day before me.

Caddy, who had not seen me since her wedding-day, was so glad and so tionate that I was half-inclined to fear I should make her husband jealous he was, in his way, just as bad—I mean as good; and in short it was story, and nobody would leave me any possibility of doing anything mem

The elder Mr. Turveydrop was in bed, I found, and Caddy was mill chocolate, which a melancholy little boy who was an apprentice—it seems a curious thing to be apprenticed to the trade of dancing—was waiting up-stairs. Her father-in-law was extremely kind and considerate, Caddy and they lived most happily together. (When she spoke of their living t she meant that the old gentleman had all the good things and all th lodging, while she and her husband had what they could get, and were into two corner rooms over the Mews.)

"And how is your mama, Caddy?" said I.

"Why, I hear of her, Esther," replied Caddy, "through Pa; but I s little of her. We are good friends, I am glad to say; but Ma thinks something absurd in my having married a dancing-master, and she is rather of its extending to her."

It struck me that if Mrs. Jellyby had discharged her own natural duti obligations, before she swept the horizon with a telescope in search of oth would have taken the best precautions against becoming absurd; but scarcely observe that I kept this to myself.

"And your papa, Caddy?"

"He comes here every evening," returned Caddy, "and is so fond of sit the corner there, that it's a treat to see him."

Looking at the corner, I plainly perceived the mark of Mr. Jellyby against the wall. It was consolatory to know that he had found such a place for it.

"And you, Caddy," said I, "you are always busy, I'll be bound?"

"Well, my dear," returned Caddy, "I am indeed; for to tell you a secret, I am qualifying myself to give lessons. Prince's health is not stron I want to be able to assist him. What with schools, and classes here, and pupils, *and* the apprentices, he really has too much to do, poor fellow!"

The notion of the apprentices was still so odd to me, that I asked Ca there were many of them?

"Four," said Caddy. "One in-door, and three out. They are very children; only when they get together they *will* play—children-like—inst attending to their work. So the little boy you saw just now waltzes by him the empty kitchen, and we distribute the others over the house as well as w

"That is only for their steps, of course?" said I.

"Only for their steps," said Caddy. "In that way they practise, so many at a time, whatever steps they happen to be upon. They dance in the acad and at this time of year we do Figures at five every morning."

"Why, what a laborious life!" I exclaimed.

"I assure you, my dear," returned Caddy, smiling, "when the out-door p tices ring us up in the morning (the bell rings into our room, not to disti Mr. Turveydrop), and when I put up the window, and see them standing door-step with their little pumps under their arms, I am actually reminded Sweeps."

All this presented the art to me in a singular light, to be sure. Caddy enjoyed the effect of her communication, and cheerfully recounted the particulars of her own studies.

"You see, my dear, to save expense, I ought to know something of the Piano, and I ought to know something of the Kit too, and consequently I have to practise those two instruments as well as the details of our profession. If Ma had been like anybody else, I might have had some little musical knowledge to begin upon. However, I hadn't any; and that part of the work is, at first, a little discouraging, I must allow. But I have a very good ear, and I am used to drudgery —I have to thank Ma for that, at all events—and where there's a will there's a way, you know, Esther, the world over." Saying these words, Caddy laughingly sat down at a little jingling square piano, and really rattled off a quadrille with great spirit. Then she good-humouredly and blushingly got up again, and while she still laughed herself, said "Don't laugh at me, please; that's a dear girl!"

I would sooner have cried, but I did neither. I encouraged her and praised her with all my heart. For I conscientiously believed, dancing-master's wife though she was, and dancing-mistress though in her limited ambition she aspired to be, she had struck out a natural, wholesome, loving course of industry and perseverance that was quite as good as a Mission.

"My dear," said Caddy, delighted, "you can't think how you cheer me. I shall owe you, you don't know how much. What changes, Esther, even in my small world! You recollect that first night, when I was so unpolite and inky? Who would have thought, then, of my ever teaching people to dance, of all other possibilities and impossibilities!"

Her husband, who had left us while we had this chat, now coming back, preparatory to exercising the apprentices in the ball-room, Caddy informed me she was quite at my disposal. But it was not my time yet, I was glad to tell her; for I should have been vexed to take her away then. Therefore we three adjourned to the apprentices together, and I made one in the dance.

The apprentices were the queerest little people. Besides the melancholy boy, who, I hoped, had not been made so by waltzing alone in the empty kitchen, there were two other boys, and one dirty little limp girl in a gauzy dress. Such a precocious little girl, with such a dowdy bonnet on (that, too, of a gauzy texture), who brought her sandled shoes in an old threadbare velvet reticule. Such mean little boys, when they were not dancing, with string, and marbles, and crambones in their pockets, and the most untidy legs and feet—and heels particularly.

I asked Caddy what had made their parents choose this profession for them? Caddy said she didn't know; perhaps they were designed for teachers; perhaps for the stage. They were all people in humble circumstances, and the melancholy boy's mother kept a ginger-beer shop.

We danced for an hour with great gravity; the melancholy child doing wonders with his lower extremities, in which there appeared to be some sense of enjoyment though it never rose above his waist. Caddy, while she was observant of her husband, and was evidently founded upon him, had acquired a grace and self-possession of her own, which, united to her pretty face and figure, was uncommonly agreeable. She already relieved him of much of the instruction of these young people; and he seldom interfered, except to walk his part in the figure if he had anything to do in it. He always played the tune. The affectation of the gauzy child, and her condescension to the boys, was a sight. And thus we danced an hour by the clock.

When the practice was concluded, Caddy's husband made himself ready to go out of town to a school, and Caddy ran away to get ready to go out with me. I was in the ball-room in the interval, contemplating the apprentices. The two ext-

dressed in a great many colours, and was discovered at a table reading law-papers with his forefinger to his forehead.

"Miss Summerson," said Mr. Guppy, rising, "this is indeed an Oasis. Mother, will you be so good as to put a chair for the other lady, and get out of the gangway."

Mrs. Guppy, whose incessant smiling gave her quite a waggish appearance, did as her son requested; and then sat down in a corner, holding her pocket-handkerchief to her chest, like a fomentation, with both hands.

I presented Caddy, and Mr. Guppy said that any friend of mine was more than welcome. I then proceeded to the object of my visit.

"I took the liberty of sending you a note, sir," said I.

Mr. Guppy acknowledged the receipt by taking it out of his breast-pocket, putting it to his lips, and returning it to his pocket with a bow. Mr. Guppy's mother was so diverted that she rolled her head as she smiled, and made a silent appeal to Caddy with her elbow.

"Could I speak to you alone for a moment?" said I.

Anything like the jocoseness of Mr. Guppy's mother just now, I think I never saw. She made no sound of laughter; but she rolled her head, and shook it, and put her handkerchief to her mouth, and appealed to Caddy with her elbow, and her hand, and her shoulder, and was so unspeakably entertained altogether that it was with some difficulty she could marshal Caddy through the little folding-door into her bedroom adjoining.

"Miss Summerson," said Mr. Guppy, "you will excuse the waywardness of a parent ever mindful of a son's appiness. My mother, though highly exasperating to the feelings, is actuated by maternal dictates."

I could hardly have believed that anybody could in a moment have turned so red, or changed so much, as Mr. Guppy did when I now put up my veil.

"I asked the favour of seeing you for a few moments here," said I, "in preference to calling at Mr. Kenge's, because, remembering what you said on a occasion when you spoke to me in confidence, I feared I might otherwise cause you some embarrassment, Mr. Guppy."

I caused him embarrassment enough as it was, I am sure. I never saw such faltering, such confusion, such amazement and apprehension."

"Miss Summerson," stammered Mr. Guppy, "I—I beg your pardon, but in our profession—we—we—find it necessary to be explicit. You have referred to an occasion, miss, when I—when I did myself the honour of making a declaration which—"

Something seemed to rise in his throat that he could not possibly swallow. He put his hand there, coughed, made faces, tried again to swallow it, coughed again, made faces again, looked all round the room, and flattered his papers.

"A kind of giddy sensation has come upon me, miss," he explained, "which rather knocks me over. I—I'm a little subject to this sort of thing at times. By George!"

I gave him a little time to recover. He consumed it in putting his hand to his forehead and taking it away again, and in backing his chair into the corner behind him.

"My intention was to remark, miss," said Mr. Guppy, "dear me—something bronchial, I think—hem!—to remark that you was so good on that occasion as to repel and repudiate that declaration. You—you wouldn't perhaps object to admit that? Though no witnesses are present, it might be a satisfaction to you—your mind—if you was to put in that admission."

"There can be no doubt," said I, "that I declined your proposal without any reservation or qualification whatever, Mr. Guppy."

this impression of yours to me in a confidence which I have really wished to respect - and which I always have respected, as you remember. I have mentioned my illness. There really is no reason why I should hesitate to say that I know very well that any little delicacy I might have had in making a request to you, is quite removed. Therefore I make the entreaty I have now preferred; and I hope you will have sufficient consideration for me, to accede to it."

I must do Mr. Guppy the further justice of saying that he had looked more and more ashamed, and that he looked most ashamed, and very came it, when he now replied with a burning face:

"Upon my word and honour, upon my life, upon my soul, Miss Summerson, as I am a living man, I'll act according to your wish! I'll never go another step in opposition to it. I'll take my oath to it, if it will be any satisfaction to you. In what I promise at this present time touching the matters now in question," continued Mr. Guppy, rapidly, as if he were repeating a familiar form of words, "I speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so — —"

"I am quite satisfied," said I, rising at this point, "and I thank you very much. Caddy, my dear, I am ready!"

Mr. Guppy's mother returned with Caddy, now making me the recipient of her silent laughter and her nudges, and we took our leave. Mr. Guppy saw us to the door with the air of one who was either imperfectly awake or walking in his sleep; and we left him there, staring.

But in a minute he came after us down the street without any hat, and with his long hair all blown about, and stopped us, saying fervently:

"Miss Summerson, upon my honour and soul, you may depend upon me!"

"I do," said I, "quite confidently."

"I beg your pardon, miss," said Mr. Guppy, going with one leg and staying with the other, "but this lady being present, your own witness it might be a satisfaction to your mind which I should wish to set at rest if you was to repeat those admissions."

"Well, Caddy," said I, turning to her, "perhaps you will not be surprised when I tell you, my dear, that there never has been any engagement—"

"No proposal or promise of marriage whatsoever," suggested Mr. Guppy.

"No proposal or promise of marriage whatever," said I, "between this gentleman—"

"William Guppy of Penton Place, Pentonville, in the county of Middlesex," he murmured.

"Between this gentleman, Mr. William Guppy, of Penton Place, Pentonville, in the county of Middlesex, and myself."

"Thank you, miss," said Mr. Guppy. "Very full,- er - excuse me--lady's name, Christian and surname both?"

I gave them.

"Married woman, I believe?" said Mr. Guppy. "Married woman. Thank you. Formerly Caroline Jellyby, spinster, then of Thavies Inn, within the city of London, but extra-parochial; now of Newman Street, Oxford Street. Much obliged."

He ran home and came running back again.

"Touching that matter, you know, I really and truly am very sorry that my arrangements in life, combined with circumstances over which I have no control, should prevent a renewal of what was wholly terminate I come time back," said Mr. Guppy to me, forlornly and despondently, "but it could n't be. Now could it, you know! I only put it to you."

I replied it certainly could not. The subject did not admit of a doubt. We thanked me, and ran to his mother's again - and back again.

CHAPTE

[illegible]

[illegible] preceded [illegible] Inn. Chan[illegible] a large [illegible] of two [illegible] man in his way [illegible] to the dry [illegible] Sumner's memo[illegible] commemorative [illegible]

[illegible]

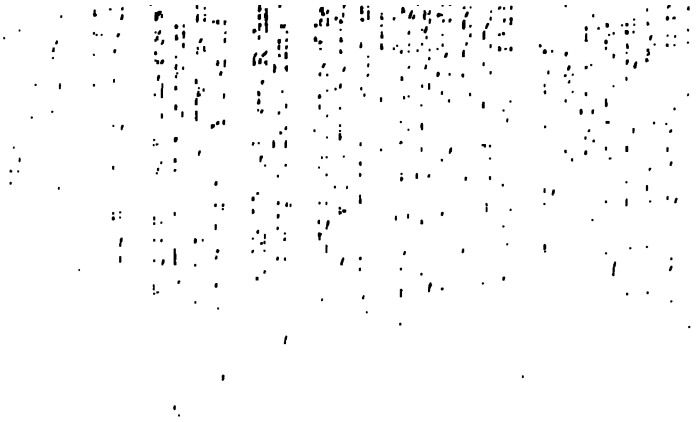
t its grand principle is to make business for itself at their expense, and y will cease to grumble.

t perceiving this quite plainly—only seeing it by halves in a confused laity sometimes suffer in peace and pocket, with a bad grace, and *do* ery much. Then this respectability of Mr. Vholes is brought into power- gainst them. "Repeal this statute, my good sir?" says Mr. Kenge, to g client, "repeal it, my dear sir? Never, with my consent. Alter this nd what will be the effect of your rash proceeding on a class of practi- ry worthily represented, allow me to say to you, by the opposite attorney e, Mr. Vholes? Sir, that class of practitioners would be swept from the e earth. Now you cannot afford—I will say, the social system cannot lose an order of men like Mr. Vholes. Diligent, persevering, steady, business. My dear sir, I understand your present feelings against the tate of things, which I grant to be a little hard in your case; but I can e my voice for the demolition of a class of men like Mr. Vholes." The ility of Mr. Vholes has even been cited with crushing effect before Parlia- ommittees, as in the following blue minutes of a distinguished attorney's "Question (number five hundred and seventeen thousand eight hundred nine). If I understand you, these forms of practice indisputably occasion Answer. Yes, some delay. Question. And great expense? Answer. aredly they cannot be gone through for nothing. Question. And un- vexation? Answer. I am not prepared to say that. They have never any vexation; quite the contrary. Question. But you think that their would damage a class of practitioners? Answer. I have no doubt of it. Can you instance any type of that class? Answer. Yes. I would ngly mention Mr. Vholes. He would be ruined. Question. Mr. Vholes red, in the profession, a respectable man? Answer"—which proved e inquiry for ten years—"Mr. Vholes is considered, in the profession, a ectable man."

miliar conversation, private authorities no less disinterested will remark don't know what this age is coming to; that we are plunging down ; that now here is something else gone; that these changes are death like Vholes; a man of undoubted respectability, with a father in the Taunton, and three daughters at home. Take a few steps more in this ay they, and what is to become of Vholes's father? Is he to perish? Vholes's daughters? Are they to be shirt-makers, or governesses? As Mr. Vholes and his relations being minor cannibal chiefs, and it being to abolish cannibalism, indignant champions were to put the case thus: n-eating unlawful, and you starve the Vholeses!

ord, Mr. Vholes, with his three daughters and his father in the Vale of is continually doing duty, like a piece of timber, to shore up some oundation that has become a pitfall and a nuisance. And with a great ple in a great many instances, the question is never one of a change from Right (which is quite an extraneous consideration), but is always one or advantage to that eminently respectable legion, Vholes.

Lancellor is, within these ten minutes, "up" for the long vacation. Mr. and his young client, and several blue bags hastily stuffed, out of all of form, as the larger sort of serpents are in their first gorged state, rned to the official den. Mr. Vholes, quiet and unmoved, as a man of respectability ought to be, takes off his close black gloves as if he were his hands, lifts off his tight hat as if he were scalping himself, and sits his desk. The client throws his hat and gloves upon the ground—tosses rwhere, without looking after them or caring where they go; flings



give your minds to it. If you had asked me what *I* was to do, during the vacation, I could have answered you more readily. I am to attend to your interests. I am to be found here, day by day, attending to your interests. That is my duty, Mr. C.; and term-time or vacation makes no difference to me. If you wish to consult me as to your interests, you will find me here at all times alike. Other professional men go out of town. I don't. Not that I blame them for going; I merely say, I don't go. This desk is your rock, sir!"

Mr. Vholes gives it a rap, and it sounds as hollow as a coffin. Not to Richard, though. There is encouragement in the sound to him. Perhaps Mr. Vholes knows there is.

"I am perfectly aware, Mr. Vholes," says Richard, more familiarly and good-humouredly, "that you are the most reliable fellow in the world; and that to have to do with you, is to have to do with a man of business who is not to be hoodwinked. But put yourself in my case, dragging on this dislocated life, sinking deeper and deeper into difficulty every day, continually hoping and continually disappointed, conscious of change upon change for the worse in myself, and of no change for the better in anything else; and you will find it a dark-looking case sometimes, as I do."

"You know," says Mr. Vholes, "that I never give hopes, sir. I told you from the first, Mr. C., that I never give hopes. Particularly in a case like this, where the greater part of the costs comes out of the estate, I should not be considerate of my good name, if I gave hopes. It might seem as if costs were my object. Still, when you say there is no change for the better I must, as a bare matter of fact, deny that."

"Aye?" returns Richard, brightening. "But how do you make it out?"

"Mr. Carstone, you are represented by ——"

"You said just now—a rock."

"Yes, sir," says Mr. Vholes, gently shaking his head and rapping the hollow desk, with a sound as if ashes were falling on ashes, and dust on dust, "a rock. That's something. You are separately represented, and no longer hidden and lost in the interests of others. *That's* something. The suit does not sleep; we wake it up, we air it, we walk it about. *That's* something. It's not all Jarndyce, in fact as well as in name. *That's* something. Nobody has it all his own way now, sir. And *that's* something, surely."

Richard, his face flushing suddenly, strikes the desk with his clenched hand.

"Mr. Vholes! If any man had told me, when I first went to John Jarndyce's house, that he was anything but the disinterested friend he seemed—that he was what he has gradually turned out to be—I could have found no words strong enough to repel the slander; I could not have defended him too ardently. So little did I know of the world! Whereas now, I do declare to you that he becomes to me the embodiment of the suit; that, in place of its being an abstraction, it is John Jarndyce; that the more I suffer, the more indignant I am with him; that every new delay, and every new disappointment, is only a new injury from John Jarndyce's hand."

"No, no," says Vholes. "Don't say so. We ought to have patience, all of us. Besides, I never disparage, sir. I never disparage."

"Mr. Vholes," returns the angry client. "You know as well as I, that he would have strangled the suit if he could."

"He was not active in it," Mr. Vholes admits, with an appearance of reluctance. "He certainly was not active in it. But however, but however, he might have had amiable intentions. Who can read the heart, Mr. C.!"

"You can," returns Richard.

"I, Mr. C.?"

"Well enough to know what his intentions were. Are, or are not, our interests conflicting? Tell—me—that?" says Richard, accompanying his last three words with three taps on his rock of trust.

"Mr. C," returns Vholes, immovable in attitude and never winking his hungry eyes, "I should be wanting in my duty as your professional adviser, I should be departing from my fidelity to your interests, if I represented those interests as identical with the interests of Mr. Jarndyce. They are no such thing, sir. I never impute motives; I both have, and am, a father, and I never impute motives. But I must not shrink from a professional duty, even if it sows dissensions in families. I understand you to be now consulting me professionally, as to your interests? You are so? I reply then, they are not identical with those of Mr. Jarndyce."

"Of course they are not!" cries Richard. "You found that out, long ago."

"Mr. C," returns Vholes, "I wish to say no more of any third party than is necessary. I wish to leave my good name unsullied, together with any little property of which I may become possessed through industry and perseverance, to my daughters Emma, Jane, and Caroline. I also desire to live in amity with my professional brethren. When Mr. Skimpole did me the honour, sir—I will not say the very high honour, for I never stoop to flattery—of bringing us together in this room, I mentioned to you that I could offer no opinion or advice as to your interests, while those interests were intrusted to another member of the profession. And I spoke in such terms as I was bound to speak, of Kenge and Carboy's office, which stands high. You, sir, thought fit to withdraw your interests from that keeping nevertheless, and to offer them to me. You brought them with clean hands, sir, and I accepted them with clean hands. Those interests are now paramount in this office. My digestive functions, as you may have heard me mention, are not in a good state, and rest might improve them; but I shall not rest, sir, while I am your representative. Whenever you want me, you will find me here. Summon me anywhere, and I will come. During the long vacation, sir, I shall devote my leisure to studying your interests more and more closely, and to making arrangements for moving heaven and earth (including, of course, the Chancellor) after Michaelmas term; and when I ultimately congratulate you, sir," says Mr. Vholes, with the severity of a determined man, "when I ultimately congratulate you, sir, with all my heart, on your accession to fortune—which, but that I never give hopes, I might say something further about—you will owe me nothing, beyond whatever little balance may be then outstanding of the costs as between solicitor and client, not included in the taxed costs allowed out of the estate. I pretend to no claim upon you, Mr. C, but for the zealous and active discharge—not the languid and routine discharge, sir: that much credit I stipulate for—of my professional duty. My duty prosperously ended, all between us is ended."

Vholes finally adds, by way of rider to this declaration of his principles, that as Mr. Carstone is about to rejoin his regiment, perhaps Mr. C will favour him with an order on his agent for twenty pounds on account.

"For there have been many little consultations and attendances of late, sir," observes Vholes, turning over the leaves of his Diary, "and these things mount up, and I don't profess to be a man of capital. When we first entered on our present relations, I stated to you openly—it is a principle of mine that there never can be too much openness between solicitor and client—that I was not a man of capital; and that if capital was your object, you had better leave your papers in Kenge's office. No, Mr. C, you will find none of the advantages, or disadvantages, of capital here, sir. This," Vholes gives the desk one hollow blow again, "is your rock; it pretends to be nothing more."

The client, with his dejection insensibly relieved, and his vague hopes rekindled, takes pen and ink and writes the draft; not without perplexed consideration and calculation of the date it may bear, implying scant effects in the agent's hands. All the while, Vholes, buttoned up in body and mind, looks at him attentively. All the while, Vholes's official cat watches the mouse's hole.

Lastly, the client, shaking hands, beseeches Mr. Vholes, for Heaven's sake and Earth's sake, to do his utmost, to "pull him through" the Court of Chancery. Mr. Vholes, who never gives hopes, lays his palm upon the client's shoulder, and answers with a smile, "Always here, sir. Personally, or by letter, you will always find me here, sir, with my shoulder to the wheel." Thus they part; and Vholes, left alone, employs himself in carrying sundry little matters out of his Diary into his draft bill book, for the ultimate behoof of his three daughters. So might an industrious fox, or bear, make up his account of chickens or stray travellers with an eye to his cubs; not to disparage by that word the three raw-visaged, lank, and buttoned-up maidens, who dwell with the parent Vholes in an earthy cottage situated in a damp garden at Kennington.

Richard, emerging from the heavy shade of Symond's Inn into the sun-shine of Chancery Lane (for there happens to be sunshine there to-day) walks thoughtfully on, and turns into Lincoln's Inn, and passes under the shadow of the Lincoln's Inn trees. On many such loungers have the speckled shadows of these trees often fallen; on the like bent head, the bitten nail, the lowering eye, the lingering step, the purposeless and dreamy air, the good consuming and consumed, the life turned sour. This lounger is not shabby yet, but that may come. Chancery, which knows no wisdom but in Precedent, is very rich in such Precedents; and why should one be different from ten thousand?

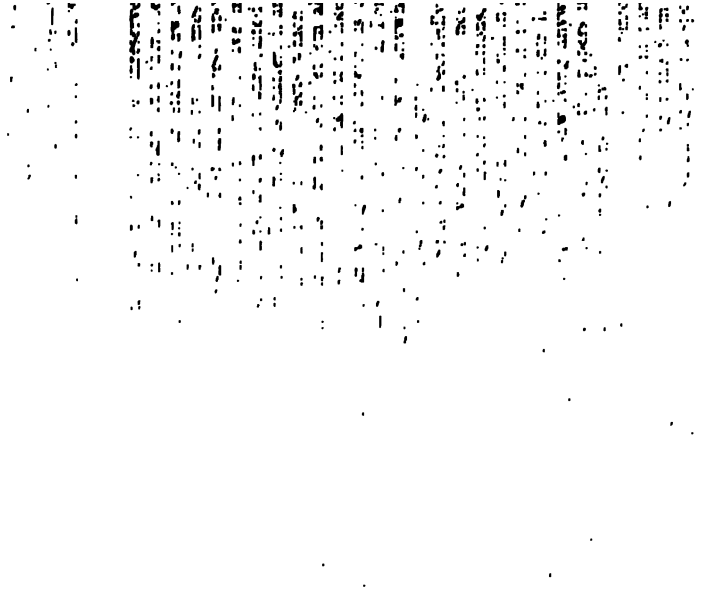
Yet the time is so short since his depreciation began, that as he saunters away, reluctant to leave the spot for some long months together, though he hates it, Richard himself may feel his own case as if it were a startling one. While his heart is heavy with corroding care, suspense, distrust, and doubt, it may have room for some sorrowful wonder when he recalls how different his first visit there, how different he, how different all the colours of his mind. But injustice breeds injustice; the fighting with shadows and being defeated by them, necessitates the setting up of substances to combat; from the impalpable suit which no man alive can understand, the time for that being long gone by, it has become a gloomy relief to turn to the palpable figure of the friend who would have saved him from this ruin, and make *him* his enemy. Richard has told Vholes the truth. Is he in a hardened or a softened mood, he still lays his injuries equally at that door; he was thwarted, in that quarter, of a set purpose, and that purpose could only originate in the one subject that is resolving his existence into itself; besides, it is a justification to him in his own eyes to have an embodied antagonist and oppressor.

Is Richard a monster in all this,—or would Chancery be found rich in such Precedents too, if they could be got [illegible] from the Recording Angel?

Two pairs of eyes not unused to such [illegible] him, as, biting his nails and brooding, he crosses the square, [illegible] the shadow of the southern gateway. Mr. Guppy and Mr. W[illegible] of those eyes, and they have been leaning [illegible] the trees. He passed close by them, [illegible] the ground.

"William," says Mr. Weevle, [illegible] going on there? It's not a case of Sp[illegible] it is."

"Ah!" says Mr. Guppy, [illegible] and I suppose he's over head and ears in debt. [illegible] We [illegible]



pouring out of teapots, crown-pieces overflowing punch-bowls, old chairs and mattresses stuffed with Bank of England notes. It possesses itself of the six-penny history (with highly-coloured folding frontispiece) of Mr. Daniel Dancer and his sister, and also of Mr Elwes, of Suffolk, and transfers all the facts from those authentic narratives to Mr. Krook. Twice when the dustman is called in to carry off a cartload of old paper, ashes, and broken bottles, the whole court assembles and pries into the baskets as they come forth. Many times the two gentlemen who write with the ravenous little pens on the tissue paper are seen prowling in the neighbourhood—shy of each other, their late partnership being dissolved. The Sol skilfully carries a vein of the prevailing interest through the Harmonic nights. Little Swills, in what are professionally known as "patter" allusions to the subject, is received with loud applause; and the same vocalist "gags" in the regular business like a man inspired. Even Miss M. Melvilleson, in the revived Caledonian melody of "We're a nodding," points the sentiment that "the dogs love brose" (whatever the nature of that refreshment may be) with such archness, and such a turn of the head towards next door, that she is immediately understood to mean, Mr. Smallweed loves to find money, and is nightly honoured with a double encore. For all this, the court discovers nothing; and, as Mrs. Piper and Mrs. Perkins now communicate to the late lodger whose appearance is the signal for a general rally, it is in one continual ferment to discover everything, and more.

Mr. Weevle and Mr. Guppy, with every eye in the court's head upon them, knock at the closed door of the late lamented's house, in a high state of popularity. But, being contrary to the court's expectation admitted, they immediately become unpopular, and are considered to mean no good.

The shutters are more or less closed all over the house, and the ground-floor is sufficiently dark to require candles. Introduced into the back shop by Mr. Smallweed the younger, they, fresh from the sunlight, can at first see nothing save darkness and shadows; but they gradually discern the elder Mr. Smallweed, seated in his chair upon the brink of a well or grave of waste paper: the virtuous Judy groping therein, like a female sexton; and Mrs. Smallweed on the level ground in the vicinity, snowed up in a heap of paper fragments, print and manuscript, which would appear to be the accumulated compliments that have been sent flying at her in the course of the day. The whole party, Small included, are blackened with dust and dirt, and present a fiendish appearance not relieved by the general aspect of the room. There is more litter and lumber in it than of old, and it is dirtier if possible; likewise, it is ghostly with traces of its dead inhabitant, and even with his chalked writing on the wall.

On the entrance of visitors, Mr. Smallweed and Judy simultaneously fold their arms and stop in their researches.

"Aha!" croaks the old gentleman. "How de do, gentlemen, how de do? Come to fetch your property, Mr. Weevle? That's well, that's well. Ha, ha! We should have been forced to sell your property, to pay your warehouse room, if you had left it here much longer. You recruited at home here, again, I dare say? Glad to see you, glad to see you."

Mr. Weevle, thanking him, casts an eye about. Mr. Guppy's eye follows Mr. Weevle's eye. Mr. Weevle's eye comes back without any new intelligence in it. Mr. Guppy's eye comes back, and meets Mr. Smallweed's eye. The extinguished old gentleman is still murmuring, like some worn-out instrument running down, "How de do, sir—how de—how——." And then having run down, collapses into grinning silence, as Mr. Guppy starts at seeing Mr. Talkinghorn standing in the darkness opposite, with his hands behind him.

"Gentleman so kind as to act as my solicitor," says Grandfather Smallweed. "I am not the sort of client for a gentleman of such note; but he is so good."

Mr. Guppy lightly nudging his friend to take another look, makes bow to Mr. Tulkinghorn, who returns it with an easy nod. Mr. Tulk looking on as if he had nothing else to do, and were rather amused by t

"A good deal of property here, sir, I should say," Mr. Guppy obse Smallweed.

"Principally rags and rubbish, my dear friend! rags and rubbish Bart, and my grand-daughter Judy, are endeavouring to make out an i what's worth anything to sell. But we haven't come to much as yet, w —come—to—hah!"

Mr. Smallweed has run down again; while Mr. Weevle's eye, atten Guppy's eye, has again gone round the room and come back.

"Well, sir," says Mr. We won't intrude any longe allow us to go up-stairs."

"Anywhere, my dear si ! You're at home. Make y pray!"

As they go up-stairs, M s his eyebrows inquiringly, an Tony. Tony shakes his h ind the old room very dull a with the ashes of the fire- ming on that memorable night discoloured grate. They t disinclination to touch any carefully blow the dust fr or are they desirous to prolong packing the few moveable- sible speed, and never speaki whisper.

"Look here," says Tony, recoiling. "Here's that horrible cat comi

Mr. Guppy retreats behind a chair. "Small told me of her. She ing and bounding and tearing about, that night, like a Dragon, and got house-top, and roamed about up there for a fortnight, and then cam down the chimney very thin. Did you ever see such a brute? Lool knew all about it, don't she? Almost looks as if she was Krook. Get out, you goblin!"

Lady Jane in the doorway, with her tiger-snarl from ear to ear, and a tail, shows no intention of obeying; but Mr. Tulkinghorn stumblin she spits at his rusty legs, and swearing wrathfully, takes her arched bac Possibly to roam the house-tops again, and return by the chimney.

"Mr. Guppy," says Mr. Tulkinghorn, "could I have a word with yc

Mr. Guppy is engaged in collecting the Galaxy Gallery of British B the wall, and depositing those works of art in their old ignoble bandbo he returns, reddening, "I wish to act with courtesy towards every r the profession, and especially, I am sure, towards a member of it so v as yourself—I will truly add, sir, so distinguished as yourself. Still, Mr horn, sir, I must stipulate that if you have any word with me, that wor in the presence of my friend."

"Oh, indeed?" says Mr. Tulkinghorn.

"Yes, sir. My reasons are not of a personal nature at all; but they sufficient for myself."

"No doubt, no doubt." Mr. Tulkinghorn is as imperturbable as t stone to which he has quietly walked. "The matter is not of that cc that I need put you to the trouble of making any conditions, Mr. Gup pauses here to smile, and his smile is as dull and rusty as his pantaloor are to be congratulated, Mr. Guppy; you are a fortunate young man, si

"Pretty well so, Mr. Tulkinghorn; I don't complain."

"Complain? High friends, free admission to great houses, and elegant ladies! Why, Mr. Guppy, there are people in London who their ears to be you."

ppy, looking as if he would give his own reddening and still reddening one of those people at present instead of himself, replies, "Sir, if I my profession, and do what is right by Kenge and Carboy, my friends iintances are of no consequence to them, nor to any member of the pro- ıot excepting Mr. Tulkinghorn of the Fields. I am not under any ı to explain myself further; and with all respect for you, sir, and without I repeat, without offence——"
ertainly!"
on't intend to do it."
so," says Mr. Tulkinghorn, with a calm nod. "Very good: I see by raits that you take a strong interest in the fashionable great, sir?"
resses this to the astounded Tony, who admits the soft impeachment.
tue in which few Englishmen are deficient," observes Mr. Tulkinghorn. ien standing on the hearthstone, with his back to the smoked chimney- l now turns round, with his glasses to his eyes. "Who is this? 'Lady Ha! A very good likeness in its way, but it wants force of character. to you, gentlemen; good day!"
he has walked out, Mr. Guppy, in a great perspiration, nerves himself sty completion of the taking down of the Galaxy Gallery, concluding r Dedlock.
," he says hurriedly to his astonished companion, "let us be quick in ıe things together, and in getting out of this place. It were in vain conceal from you, Tony, that between myself and one of the members ılike aristocracy whom I now hold in my hand, there has been un- communication and association. The time might have been, when I e revealed it to you. It never will be more. It is due alike to the oath ien, alike to the shattered idol, and alike to circumstances over which I ontrol, that the whole should be buried in oblivion. I charge you as a the interest you have ever testified in the fashionable intelligence, and lle advances with which I may have been able to accommodate you, so without a word of inquiry!"
arge Mr. Guppy delivers in a state little short of forensic lunacy, while shows a dazed mind in his whole head of hair, and even in his cultivated

CHAPTER XL.

NATIONAL AND DOMESTIC.

ı has been in a dreadful state for some weeks. Lord Coodle would go Thomas Doodle wouldn't come in, and there being nobody in Great ı speak of) except Coodle and Doodle, there has been no Government. rcy that the hostile meeting between those two great men, which at one ıed inevitable, did not come off; because if both pistols had taken l Coodle and Doodle had killed each other, it is to be presumed that nust have waited to be governed until young Coodle and young Doodle, ·ocks and long stockings, were grown up. This stupendous national however, was averted by Lord Coodle's making the timely discovery, the heat of debate he had said that he scorned and despised the whole areer of Sir Thomas Doodle, he had merely meant to say that party s should never induce him to withhold from it the tribute of his warmest

cousins, and all his brothers-in-law. So there is hope for the old
Doodle has found that he must throw himself upon the country
form of sovereigns and beer. In this metamorphosed state he is
good many places simultaneously, and can throw himself upon a c
tion of the country at one time. Britannia being much occupie
Doodle in the form of sovereigns, and swallowing Doodle in the fo
in swearing herself black in the face that she does neither—pla
vancement of her glory and morality—the London season comes t
through all the Doodlites and Coodleites dispersing to assist Bri
religious exercises.

Hence Mrs. Rouncewell hon-ekeeper at Chesney Wold foresees
structions have yet come down, that the family may shortly be exp
with a pretty large accession of cousins and others who can in any
great Constitutional work. And hence the stately old dame, takir
forelock, leads him up and down the staircases, and along the gal
sages, and through the rooms, to witness before he grows any ol
thing is ready: that floors are rubbed bright, carpets spread, curta
bols puffed and patted, still-room and kitchen cleared for action,—
pared as beseems the Dedlock dignity.

This present summer evening, as the sun goes down, the prepar
plete. Dreary and solemn the old house looks, with so many app
tation, and with no inhabitants except the pictured forms upon the
these come and go, a Dedlock in possession might have ruminated
so did they see this gallery hushed and quiet, as I see it now: so th
of the gap that they would make in this domain when they were g
as I find it, difficult to believe that it could be, without them: so
would, as I pass from theirs, now closing the reverberating door: so
to miss them, and so die.

Through some of the fiery windows, beautiful from without, and s
out hour, not in dull grey stone but in a glorious house of gold, the
other windows opens in, rich, lavish, overflowing like the summe

.dy's picture over the great chimney-piece, a weird shade falls from tree, that turns it pale, and flutters it, and looks as if a great arm or hood, watching an opportunity to draw it over her. Higher and shadow on the wall—now a red gloom on the ceiling—now the fire

prospect, which from the terrace looked so near, has moved solemnly changed—not the first nor the last of beautiful things that look so near change—into a distant phantom. Light mists arise, and the dew falls, sweet scents in the garden are heavy in the air. Now, the woods settle masses as if they were each one profound tree. And now the moon arate them, and to glimmer here and there in horizontal lines behind, and to make the avenue a pavement of light among high cathedral astically broken.

moon is high; and the great house, needing habitation more than e a body without life. Now, it is even awful, stealing through it, to live people who have slept in the solitary bedrooms: to say nothing .. Now is the time for shadow, when every corner is a cavern, and ward step a pit, when the stained glass is reflected in pale and faded the floors, when anything and everything can be made of the heavy eams excepting their own proper shapes, when the armour has dull it not easily to be distinguished from stealthy movement, and when nets are frightfully suggestive of heads inside. But, of all the shadows Wold, the shadow in the long drawing-room upon my lady's picture to come, the last to be disturbed. At this hour and by this light it o threatening hands raised up, and menacing the handsome face with h that stirs.

not well, ma'am," says a groom in Mrs. Rouncewell's audience-

ady not well! What's the matter?"

my Lady has been but poorly, ma'am, since she was last here—I don't the family, ma'am, but when she was here as a bird of passage-like. as not been out much for her, and has kept her room a good deal."

y Wold, Thomas," rejoins the housekeeper, with proud complacency, ay Lady up! There is no finer air, and no healthier soil, in the world!"

may have his own personal opinions on this subject; probably hints . in the manner of smoothing his sleek head from the nape of his neck to his out he forbears to express them further, and retires to the servants' hall n cold meat-pie and ale.

[illegible] is the pilot-fish before the nobler shark. Next evening, down come ter and my Lady with their largest retinue, and down come th[illegible] l others from all the points of the compass. [illegible] for some kward and forward rush my [illegible] with no names, who fly about articular parts of the country on which D[illegible] is at present throwing an auriferous and malty shower, but who are merely persons of [illegible] tion and never do anything anywhere.

national [illegible], Sir Le[illegible] [illegible] A[illegible] he Honourable Bob Stables to meet the Hunt at dinner, there could [illegible] . Better got up gentlemen than the other [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] ald be [illegible] V[illegible] is a little dim, but [illegible] of the [illegible] and there are many who appreciate her sprightly conversation, [illegible] aundrums so old [illegible] almost [illegible] honour of [illegible] the privilege of

her hand in the dance. On these national occasions, dancing may be a patriotic service; and Volumnia is constantly seen hopping about, for the good of an ungrateful and unpensioning country.

My Lady takes no great pains to entertain the numerous guests, and, being still unwell, rarely appears until late in the day. But, at all the dismal dinners, leaden lunches, basilisk balls, and other melancholy pageants, her mere appearance is a relief. As to Sir Leicester, he conceives it utterly impossible that anything can be wanting, in any direction, by any one who has the good fortune to be received under that roof; and in a state of sublime satisfaction, he moves among the company, a magnificent refri

Daily the cousins tro canter over roadside turf, away to hustings and polling-boo s and hunting-whips for the counties, and kid gloves and ric ths), and daily bring back reports of which Sir Leicester Daily the restless men who have no occupation in life, pr eing rather busy. Daily, Volumnia has a little cousinly t the state of the nation, from which Sir Leicester is disp olumnia is a more reflecting woman than he had thought

"How are we gett umnia, clasping her hands. "Are we safe?"

The mighty business is nearly over by this time, and Doodle will throw himself off the country in a few days more. Sir Leicester has just appeared in the long drawing-room after dinner; a bright particular star, surrounded by clouds of cousins.

"Volumnia," replies Sir Leicester, who has a list in his hand, "we are doing tolerably."

"Only tolerably!"

Although it is summer weather, Sir Leicester always had his own particular fire in the evening. He takes his usual screened seat near it, and repeats, with much firmness and a little displeasure, as who should say, I am not a common man, and when I say tolerably, it must not be understood as a common expression; "Volumnia, we are doing tolerably."

"At least there is no opposition to *you*," Volumnia asserts with confidence.

"No, Volumnia. This distracted country has lost its senses in many respects, I grieve to say, but——"

"It is not so mad as that. I am glad to hear it!"

Volumnia's finishing the sentence restores her to favour. Sir Leicester, with a gracious inclination of his head, seems to say to himself, "A sensible woman this on the whole, though occasionally precipitate."

In fact, as to this question of opposition, the fair Dedlock's observation was superfluous: Sir Leicester, on these occasions, always delivering in his own can dateship, as a kind of handsome wholesale order to be promptly executed. To other little seats that belong to him, he treats as retail orders of less importance, merely sending down the men, and signifying to the tradespeople, "You will have the goodness to make these materials into two members of parliament, and to send them home when done."

"I regret to say, Volumnia, that in many places the people have shown a local spirit, and that this opposition to the Government has been of a most determined and most implacable description."

"W-r-retches!" says Volumnia.

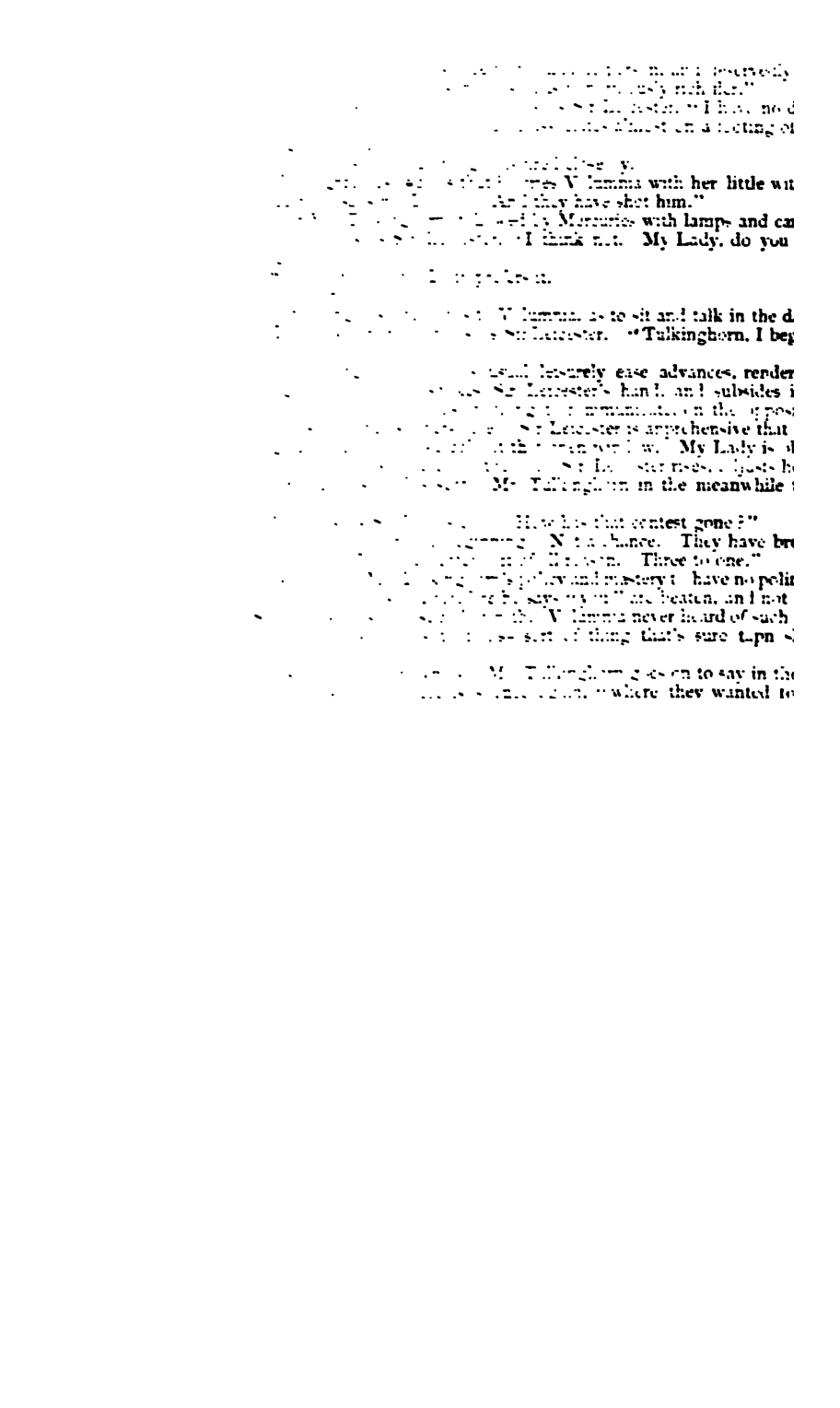
"Even," proceeds Sir Leicester, glancing at the circumjacent cousins on sofas and ottomans, "even in many—in fact, in most—of those places in which the Government has carried it against a faction——"

the way, that the Coodleites are always a faction with the Doodleites, Doodleites occupy exactly the same position towards the Coodleites.)
in them I am shocked, for the credit of Englishmen, to be constrained
u that the Party has not triumphed without being put to an enormous
indreds," says Sir Leicester, eyeing the cousins with increasing dignity
indignation, "hundreds of thousands of pounds!"
ia have a fault, it is the fault of being a trifle too innocent; seeing
cence which would go extremely well with a sash and tucker, is a little
g with the rouge and pearl necklace. Howbeit, impelled by innocence,

r?"
a," remonstrates Sir Leicester, with his utmost severity. "Volumnia!"
I don't mean what for," cries Volumnia, with her favourite little scream.
I I am! I mean what a pity!"
d," returns Sir Leicester, "that you do mean what a pity."
hastens to express her opinion that the shocking people ought to be
rs, and made to support the Party.
l, Volumnia," repeats Sir Leicester, unmindful of these mollifying
'that you do mean what a pity. It is disgraceful to the electors. But
gh inadvertently, and without intending so unreasonable a question,
hat for?' let me reply to you. For necessary expenses. And I trust
sense, Volumnia, not to pursue the subject, here or elsewhere."
ter feels it incumbent on him to observe a crushing aspect towards
ecause it is whispered abroad that these necessary expenses will, in
undred election petitions, be unpleasantly connected with the word
because some graceless jokers have consequently suggested the
n the Church service of the ordinary supplication in behalf of the High
liament, and have recommended instead that the prayers of the con-
requested for six hundred and fifty-eight gentlemen in a very unhealthy

se," observes Volumnia, having taken a little time to recover her
ter late castigation, "I suppose Mr. Tulkinghorn has been worked to

now," says Sir Leicester, opening his eyes, "why Mr. Tulkinghorn
rked to death. I don't know what Mr. Tulkinghorn's engagements
is not a candidate."
had thought he might have been employed. Sir Leicester could
w by whom, and what for? Volumnia, abashed again, suggests, by
to advise and make arrangements. Sir Leicester is not aware that
Mr. Tulkinghorn has been in need of his assistance.
lock, seated at an open window with her arm upon its cushioned ledge
out at the evening shadows falling on the park, has seemed to attend
yer's name was mentioned.
cousin with a moustache, in a state of extreme debility, now observes
ch, that—man told him ya'as'dy that Tulkinghorn had gone down
lace t' give legal 'pinion 'bout something; and that, contest being over
ld be highly jawlly thing if Tulkinghorn should pear with news that
was floored.
n attendance with coffee informs Sir Leicester, hereupon, that Mr.
has arrived, and is taking dinner. My Lady turns her head inward
nt, then looks out again as before.
is charmed to hear that her Delight is come. He is so original, such
ure, such an immense being for knowing all sorts of things and never



:ester is distinctly heard to gasp before speaking. "Did I understand
l you say that Mr. Rouncewell had been very active in this election?"
umonly active."
st—"
r yes, against you. He is a very good speaker. Plain and emphatic.
a damaging effect, and has great influence. In the business-part of the
gs he carried all before him."
ident to the whole company, though nobody can see him, that Sir
s staring majestically.
ie was much assisted," says Mr. Tulkinghorn, as a wind-up, "by his son."
s son, sir?" repeats Sir Leicester, with awful politeness.
s son."
on who wished to marry the young woman in my Lady's service?"
son. He has but one."
upon my honour," says Sir Leicester, after a terrific pause, during which
n heard to snort and felt to stare; "then upon my honour, upon my life,
reputation and principles, the floodgates of society are burst open, and
have—a—obliterated the landmarks of the framework of the cohesion
things are held together!"
burst of cousinly indignation. Volumnia thinks it is really high time,
for somebody in power to step in and do something strong. Debilitated
aks—Country 's going—DAYVLE—steeple-chase pace.
" says Sir Leicester, in a breathless condition, "that we may not com-
ner on this circumstance. Comment is superfluous. My Lady, let me
reference to that young woman——"
no intention," observes my Lady from her window, in a low but decided
parting with her."
was not my meaning," returns Sir Leicester. "I am glad to hear you say
uld suggest that as you think her worthy of your patronage, you should
influence to keep her from these dangerous hands. You might show
violence would be done, in such association, to her duties and principles;
night preserve her for a better fate. You might point out to her that she
would, in good time, find a husband at Chesney Wold by whom she
t be—" Sir Leicester adds, after a moment's consideration, "dragged
ltars of her forefathers."
emarks he offers with his unvarying politeness and deference when he
himself to his wife. She merely moves her head in reply. The moon
and where she sits there is a little stream of cold pale light, in which
s seen.
worthy of remark," says Mr. Tulkinghorn, "however, that these people
ir way, very proud."
l?" Sir Leicester doubts his hearing.
uld not be surprised, if they all voluntarily abandoned the girl—yes,
all—instead of her abandoning them, supposing she remained at Chesney
ler such circumstances."
!" says Sir Leicester, tremulously, "Well! You should know, Mr.
rn. You have been among them."
y, Sir Leicester," returns the lawyer, "I state the fact. Why, I could
story—with Lady Dedlock's permission."
d concedes it, and Volumnia is enchanted. A story! O he is going to
hing at last! A ghost in it, Volumnia hopes?
Real flesh and blood." Mr. Tulkinghorn stops for an instant, and
ith some little emphasis grafted upon his usual monotony, "Real flesh

and blood, Miss Dedlock. Sir Leicester, these particulars have only lately be known to me. They are very brief. They exemplify what I have said. I sup names for the present. Lady Dedlock will not think me ill-bred, I hope?"

By the light of the fire, which is low, he can be seen looking towards the m light. By the light of the moon Lady Dedlock can be seen, perfectly still.

"A townsman of this Mrs. Rouncewell, a man in exactly parallel circumst as I am told, had the good fortune to have a daughter who attracted the no a great lady. I speak of really a great lady; not merely great to him, but m to a gentleman of your condition, Sir Leicester."

Sir Leicester condescendingly says, "Yes, Mr. Tulkinghorn;" implying then she must have appeared of very considerable moral dimensions indeed, eyes of an ironmaster.

"The lady was wealthy and beautiful, and had a liking for the girl, and t her with great kindness, and kept her always near her. Now this lady pos a secret under all her greatness, which she had preserved for many years. I she had in early life been engaged to marry a young rake—he was a captain army—nothing connected with whom came to any good. She never did him, but she gave birth to a child of which he was the father."

By the light of the fire he can be seen looking towards the moonlight. I moonlight, Lady Dedlock can be seen in profile, perfectly still.

"The captain in the army being dead, she believed herself safe; but a tr circumstances with which I need not trouble you, led to discovery. As I re the story, they began in an imprudence on her own part one day, when sh taken by surprise; which shows how difficult it is for the firmest of us (sh very firm) to be always guarded. There was great domestic trouble and a ment, you may suppose; I leave you to imagine, Sir Leicester, the husb grief. But that is not the present point. When Mr. Rouncewell's town heard of the disclosure, he no more allowed the girl to be patronised and oured, than he would have suffered her to be trodden underfoot before his Such was his pride, that he indignantly took her away, as if from repeate disgrace. He had no sense of the honour done him and his daughter by the condescension; not the least. He resented the girl's position, as if the lad been the commonest of commoners. That is the story. I hope Lady De will excuse its painful nature."

There are various opinions on the merits, more or less conflicting with V nia's. That fair young creature cannot believe there ever was any such lad rejects the whole history on the threshold. The majority incline to the debi cousin's sentiment, which is in few words—"no business—Rouncewell's townsman." Sir Leicester generally refers back in his mind to Wat Tyl arranges a sequence of events on a plan of his own.

There is not much conversation in all, for late hours have been kept at ney Wold since the necessary expenses elsewhere began, and this is t night in many on which the family have been alone. It is past ten, wh Leicester begs Mr. Tulkinghorn to ring for candles. Then the stream of light has swelled into a lake, and then Lady Dedlock for the first time and rises, and comes forward to a table for a glass of water. Winking c bat-like in the candle glare, crowd round to give it; Volumnia (always re something better if procurable) takes another, a very mild sip of which c her; Lady Dedlock, graceful, self-possessed, looked after by admiring passes away slowly down the long perspective by the side of that Nymph, all improving her as a question of contrast.

CHAPTER XLI.

IN MR. TULKINGHORN'S ROOM.

MR. TULKINGHORN arrives in his turret-room, a little breathed by the journey up, though leisurely performed. There is an expression on his face as if he had discharged his mind of some grave matter, and were, in his close way, satisfied. To say of a man so severely and strictly self-repressed that he is triumphant, would be to do him as great an injustice as to suppose him troubled with love or sentiment, or any romantic weakness. He is sedately satisfied. Perhaps there is a rather increased sense of power upon him, as he loosely grasps one of his veinous wrists with his other hand, and holding it behind his back walks noiselessly up and down.

There is a capacious writing-table in the room, on which is a pretty large accumulation of papers. The green lamp is lighted, his reading-glasses lie upon the desk, the easy-chair is wheeled up to it, and it would seem as though he had intended to bestow an hour or so upon these claims on his attention before going to bed. But he happens not to be in a business mind. After a glance at the documents awaiting his notice—with his head bent low over the table, the old man's sight for print or writing being defective at night—he opens the French window and steps out upon the leads. There he again walks slowly up and down, in the same attitude; subsiding, if a man so cool may have any need to subside, from the story he has related down-stairs.

The time was once, when men as knowing as Mr. Tulkinghorn would walk on turret-tops in the star-light, and look up into the sky to read their fortunes there. Hosts of stars are visible to-night, though their brilliancy is eclipsed by the splendour of the moon. If he be seeking his own star, as he methodically turns and turns upon the leads, it should be but a pale one to be so rustily represented below. If he be tracing out his destiny, that may be written in other characters nearer to his hand.

As he paces the leads, with his eyes most probably as high above his thoughts as they are high above the earth, he is suddenly stopped in passing the window by two eyes that meet his own. The ceiling of his room is rather low; and the upper part of the door, which is opposite the window, is of glass. There is an inner baize door, too, but the night being warm he did not close it when he came up-stairs. These eyes that meet his own, are looking in through the glass from the corridor outside. He knows them well. The blood has not flushed into his face so suddenly and redly for many a long year, as when he recognises Lady Dedlock.

He steps into the room, and she comes in too, closing both the doors behind her. There is a wild disturbance—is it fear or anger?—in her eyes. In her carriage and all else, she looks as she looked down-stairs two hours ago.

Is it fear, or is it anger, now? He cannot be sure. Both might be as pale, both as intent.

"Lady Dedlock?"

She does not speak at first, nor even when she has slowly dropped into the easy-chair by the table. They look at each other, like two pictures.

"Why have you told my story to so many persons?"

"Lady Dedlock, it was necessary for me to inform you that I knew it."

"How long have you known it?"

"I have suspected it a long while—fully known it, a little while."

"Months?"

"Days."

He stands before her, with one hand on a chair-back and the other in his old-fashioned waistcoat and shirt-frill, exactly as he has stood before her at any time since her marriage. The same formal politeness, the same composed deference that might as well be defiance; the whole man the same dark, cold object, at the same distance, which nothing has ever diminished.

"Is this true concerning the poor girl?"

He slightly inclines and advances his head, as not quite understanding the question.

"You know what you related. Is it true? Do her friends know my story also? Is it the town-talk yet? Is it chalked upon the walls and cried in the streets?"

So! Anger, and fear, and shame. All three contending. What power the woman has to keep these raging passions down! Mr. Tulkinghorn's thoughts take such form as he looks at her, with his ragged grey eyebrows a hair's-breadth more contracted than usual, under her gaze.

"No, Lady Dedlock. That was a hypothetical case, arising out of Sir Leicester's unconsciously carrying the matter with so high a hand. But it would be a real case if they knew—what we know."

"Then they do not know it yet?"

"No."

"Can I save the poor girl from injury before they know it?"

"Really, Lady Dedlock," Mr. Tulkinghorn replies, "I cannot give a satisfactory opinion on that point."

And he thinks, with the interest of attentive curiosity, as he watches the struggle in her breast, "The power and force of this woman are astonishing!"

"Sir," she says, for the moment obliged to set her lips with all the energy she has, that she may speak distinctly, "I will make it plainer. I do not dispute your hypothetical case. I anticipated it, and felt its truth as strongly as you can do, when I saw Mr. Rouncewell here. I knew very well that if he could have had the power of seeing me as I was, he would consider the poor girl tarnished by having for a moment been, although most innocently, the subject of my great and distinguished patronage. But, I have an interest in her; or I should rather say—no longer belonging to this place—I had; and if you can find so much consideration for the woman under your foot as to remember that, she will be very sensible of your mercy."

Mr. Tulkinghorn, profoundly attentive, throws this off with a shrug of self-depreciation, and contracts his eyebrows a little more.

"You have prepared me for my exposure, and I thank you for that too. Is there anything that you require of me? Is there any claim that I can release, or any charge or trouble that I can spare my husband in obtaining *his* release, by certifying to the exactness of your discovery? I will write anything, here and now, that you will dictate. I am ready to do it."

And she would do it! thinks the lawyer, watchful of the firm hand with which she takes the pen!

"I will not trouble you, Lady Dedlock. Pray spare yourself."

"I have long expected this, as you know. I neither wish to spare myself nor to be spared. You can do nothing worse to me than you have done. Do what remains, now."

"Lady Dedlock, there is nothing to be done. I will take leave to say a few words, when you have finished."

Their need for watching one another should be over now, but they do it all the time, and the stars watch them both through the opened window. Away in the moonlight lie the woodland fields at rest, and the wide house is as quiet as the narrow one. The narrow one! Where are the digger and the spade, this pensive

ful night, destined to add the last great secret to the many secrets of the Tulkinghorn existence? Is the man born yet, is the spade wrought yet? Curious questions to consider, more curious perhaps not to consider, under the watching stars upon a summer night.

"Of repentance or remorse, or any feeling of mine," Lady Dedlock presently proceeds, "I say not a word. If I were not dumb, you would be deaf. Let that go by. It is not for your ears."

He makes a feint of offering a protest, but she sweeps it away with her disdainful hand.

"Of other and very different things I come to speak to you. My jewels are all in their proper places of keeping. They will be found there. So, my dresses. So, all the valuables I have. Some ready money I had with me, please to say, but no large amount. I did not wear my own dress, in order that I might avoid observation. I went, to be henceforward lost. Make this known. I leave no other charge with you."

"Excuse me, Lady Dedlock," says Mr. Tulkinghorn, quite unmoved. "I am not sure that I understand you. You went?——"

"To be lost to all here. I leave Chesney Wold to-night. I go this hour."

Mr. Tulkinghorn shakes his head. She rises; but he, without moving hand from chair-back or from old-fashioned waistcoat and shirt-frill, shakes his head.

"What? Not go as I have said?"

"No, Lady Dedlock," he very calmly replies.

"Do you know the relief that my disappearance will be? Have you forgotten the stain and blot upon this place, and where it is, and who it is?".

"No, Lady Dedlock, not by any means."

Without deigning to rejoin, she moves to the inner door and has it in her hand, when he says to her, without himself stirring hand or foot, or raising his voice:

"Lady Dedlock, have the goodness to stop and hear me, or before you reach the staircase I shall ring the alarm-bell and rouse the house. And then I must speak out, before every guest and servant, every man and woman, in it."

He has conquered her. She falters, trembles, and puts her hand confusedly to her head. Slight tokens these in any one else; but when so practised an eye as Mr. Tulkinghorn's sees indecision for a moment in such a subject, he thoroughly knows its value.

He promptly says again, "Have the goodness to hear me, Lady Dedlock," and motions to the chair from which she has risen. She hesitates, but he motions again, and she sits down.

"The relations between us are of an unfortunate description, Lady Dedlock: but, as they are not of my making, I will not apologise for them. The position I hold in reference to Sir Leicester is so well known to you, that I can hardly imagine but that I must long have appeared in your eyes the natural person to make this discovery."

"Sir," she returns, without looking up from the ground, on which her eyes are now fixed. "I had better have gone. It would have been far better not to have detained me. I have no more to say."

"Excuse me, Lady Dedlock, if I add, a little more to hear."

"I wish to hear it at the window, then. I can't breathe where I am."

His jealous glance as she walks that way, betrays an instant's misgiving that she may have it in her thoughts to leap over, and dashing against ledge and cornice, strike her life out upon the terrace below. But, a moment's observation of her figure as she stands in the window without any support, looking out at the stars—not up—gloomily out at those stars which are low in the heavens—reassures him. By facing round as she has moved, he stands a little behind her.

"Lady Dedlock, I have not yet been able to come to a decision satisfactory to myself, on the course before me. I am not clear what to do, or how to act next. I must suspend you, in the mean time, to keep your secret as you have kept it so long, and not to wonder that I keep it too."

He appears, but she makes no reply.

"Pardon me, Lady Dedlock. This is an important subject. You are honouring me with your attention?"

"I am."

"Thank you. I might have known it, from what I have seen of your strength of character. I ought not to have asked the question, but I have the habit of making sure of my ground, step by step, as I go on. The sole consideration is this unhappy case is Sir Leicester."

"Then, why," she asks in a low voice, and without removing her gloomy look from those distant stars, "do you detain me in his house?"

"Because he is the consideration. Lady Dedlock, I have no occasion to tell you that Sir Leicester is a very proud man; that his reliance upon you is implicit; that the fall of that moon out of the sky, would not amaze him more than you fall from your high position as his wife."

She breathes quickly and heavily, but she stands as unflinchingly as ever he has seen her in the midst of her greatest company.

"I declare to you, Lady Dedlock, that with anything short of this case that I have, I would as soon have hoped to prop up, by means of my own strength and my own hands, the oldest tree on this estate, as to shake your hold upon Sir Leicester, and Sir Leicester's trust and confidence in you. And even now, with this case, I hesitate. Not that he could doubt (that, even with him, is impossible), but that nothing can prepare him for the blow."

"Not my flight?" she returned. "Think of it again."

"Your flight, Lady Dedlock, would spread the whole truth, and a hundred times the whole truth, far and wide. It would be impossible to save the family credit for a day. It is not to be thought of."

There is a quiet decision in his reply, which admits of no remonstrance.

"When I speak of Sir Leicester being the sole consideration, he and the family credit are one. Sir Leicester and the baronetcy, Sir Leicester and Chesney Wold, Sir Leicester and his ancestors and his patrimony;" Mr. Tulkinghorn very dry here; "are, I need not say to you, Lady Dedlock, inseparable."

"Go on."

"Therefore," says Mr. Tulkinghorn, pursuing his case in his jog-trot style, "I have much to consider. This is to be hushed up, if it can be. How can it be, if Sir Leicester is driven out of his wits, or laid upon a death-bed? If I inflicted this shock upon him to-morrow morning, how could the immediate change in him be accounted for? What could have caused it? What could have divided you? Lady Dedlock, the wall-chalking and the street-crying would come on directly, and you are to remember that it would not affect you merely (whom I cannot at all consider in this business) but your husband, Lady Dedlock, your husband."

He gets plainer as he gets on, but not an atom more emphatic or animated.

"There is another point of view," he continues, "in which the case presents itself. Sir Leicester is devoted to you almost to infatuation. He might not be able to overcome that infatuation, even knowing what we know. I am putting an extreme case, but it might be so. If so, it were better that he knew nothing. Better for common sense, better for him, better for me. I must take all this into account, and it combines to render a decision very difficult."

She stands looking out at the same stars without a word. They are beginning to pale, and she looks as if their coldness froze her.

"My experience teaches me," says Mr. Tulkinghorn, who has by this time got his hands in his pockets, and is going on in his business consideration of the matter, like a machine. "My experience teaches me, Lady Dedlock, that most of the people I know would do far better to leave marriage alone. It is at the bottom of three-fourths of their troubles. So I thought when Sir Leicester married, and so I always have thought since. No more about that. I must now be guided by circumstances. In the meanwhile I must beg you to keep your own counsel, and I will keep mine."

"I am to drag my present life on, holding its pains at your pleasure, day by day?" she asks, still looking at the distant sky.

"Yes, I am afraid so, Lady Dedlock."

"It is necessary, you think, that I should be so tied to the stake?"

"I am sure that what I recommend is necessary."

"I am to remain on this gaudy platform, on which my miserable deception has been so long acted, and it is to fall beneath me when you give the signal?" she said slowly.

"Not without notice, Lady Dedlock. I shall take no step without forewarning you."

She asks all her questions as if she were repeating them from memory, or calling them over in her sleep.

"We are to meet as usual?"

"Precisely as usual, if you please."

"And I am to hide my guilt, as I have done so many years?"

"As you have done so many years. I should not have made that reference myself, Lady Dedlock, but I may now remind you that your secret can be no heavier to you than it was, and is no worse and no better than it was. *I* know it certainly, but I believe we have never wholly trusted each other."

She stands absorbed in the same frozen way for some little time, before asking:

"Is there anything more to be said to-night?"

"Why," Mr. Tulkinghorn returns methodically, as he softly rubs his hands, "I should like to be assured of your acquiescence in my arrangements, Lady Dedlock."

"You may be assured of it."

"Good. And I would wish in conclusion to remind you, as a business precaution, in case it should be necessary to recall the fact in any communication with Sir Leicester, that throughout our interview I have expressly stated my sole consideration to be Sir Leicester's feelings and honour, and the family reputation. I should have been happy to have made Lady Dedlock a prominent consideration, too, if the case had admitted of it; but unfortunately it does not."

"I can attest your fidelity, sir."

Both before and after saying it she remains absorbed, but at length moves, and turns, unshaken in her natural and acquired presence, towards the door. Mr. Tulkinghorn opens both the doors exactly as he would have done yesterday, or as he would have done ten years ago, and makes his old-fashioned bow as she passes out. It is not an ordinary look that he receives from the handsome face as it goes into the darkness, and it is not an ordinary movement, though a very slight one, that acknowledges his courtesy. But, as he reflects when he is left alone, the woman has been putting no common constraint upon herself.

He would know it all the better, if he saw the woman pacing her own rooms with her hair wildly thrown from her flung back face, her hands clasped behind her head, her figure twisted as if by pain. He would think so all the more, if he saw the woman thus hurrying up and down for hours, without fatigue, without intermission, followed by the faithful step upon the Ghost's Walk. But he shuts

out the now chilled air, draws the window-curtain, goes to bed, and falls asleep. And truly when the stars go out and the wan day peeps into the turret-chamber, finding him at his oldest, he looks as if the digger and the spade were both commissioned, and would soon be digging.

The same wan day peeps in at Sir Leicester pardoning the repentant country in a majestically condescending dream; and at the cousins entering on various public employments, principally receipt of salary; and at the chaste Volumnia, bestowing a dower of fifty thousand pounds upon a hideous old General, with a mouth of false teeth like a pianoforte too full of keys, long the admiration of Bath and the terror of every other community. Also into rooms high in the roof, and into offices in court-yards and over stables, where humbler ambition dreams of bliss, in keepers' lodges, and in holy matrimony with Will or Sally. Up comes the bright sun, drawing everything up with it—the Wills and Sallys, the latest vapour in the earth, the drooping leaves and flowers, the birds and beasts and creeping things, the gardeners to sweep the dewy turf and unfold emerald velvet where the roller passes, the smoke of the great kitchen fire wreathing itself straight and high into the lightsome air. Lastly, up comes the flag over Mr. Tulkinghorn's unconscious head, cheerfully proclaiming that Sir Leicester and Lady Dedlock are in their happy home, and that there is hospitality at the place in Lincolnshire.

CHAPTER XLII.

IN MR. TULKINGHORN'S CHAMBERS.

FROM the verdant undulations and the spreading oaks of the Dedlock property, Mr. Tulkinghorn transfers himself to the stale heat and dust of London. His manner of coming and going between the two places, is one of his impenetrabilities. He walks into Chesney Wold as if it were next door to his chambers, and returns to his chambers as if he had never been out of Lincoln's Inn Fields. He neither changes his dress before the journey, nor talks of it afterwards. He melted out of his turret-room this morning, just as now, in the late twilight, he melts into his own square.

Like a dingy London bird among the birds at roost in these pleasant fields, where the sheep are all made into parchment, the goats into wigs, and the pasture into chaff, the lawyer, smoke-dried and faded, dwelling among mankind but not consorting with them, aged without experience of genial youth, and so long used to make his cramped nest in holes and corners of human nature that he has forgotten its broader and better range, comes sauntering home. In the oven made by the hot pavements and hot buildings, he has baked himself drier than usual; and he has, in his thirsty mind, his mellowed port-wine half a century old.

The lamplighter is skipping up and down his ladder on Mr. Tulkinghorn's side of the Fields, when that high-priest of noble mysteries arrives at his own dull court-yard. He ascends the door-steps, and is gliding into the dusky hall, when he encounters, on the top step, a bowing and propitiatory little man.

"Is that Snagsby?"

"Yes sir. I hope you are well sir. I was just giving you up sir, and going home."

"Aye? What is it? What do you want with me?"

"Well sir," says Mr. Snagsby, holding his hat at the side of his head, in his

deference towards his best customer, "I was wishful to say a word to you sir."

"Can you say it here?"

"Perfectly sir."

"Say it then." The lawyer turns, leans his arms on the iron railing at the top of the steps, and looks at the lamplighter lighting the court-yard.

"It is relating," says Mr. Snagsby, in a mysterious low voice: "it is relating—not to put too fine a point upon it—to the foreigner sir?"

Mr. Tulkinghorn eyes him with some surprise. "What foreigner?"

"The foreign female sir. French, if I don't mistake? I am not acquainted with that language myself, but I should judge from her manners and appearance that she was French; anyways, certainly foreign. Her that was up-stairs sir, when Mr. Bucket and me had the honour of waiting upon you with the sweeping-boy that night."

"Oh! yes, yes. Mademoiselle Hortense."

"Indeed sir?" Mr. Snagsby coughs his cough of submission behind his hat. "I am not acquainted myself with the names of foreigners in general, but I have no doubt it *would* be that." Mr. Snagsby appears to have set out in this reply with some desperate design of repeating the name: but on reflection coughs again to excuse himself.

"And what can you have to say, Snagsby," demands Mr. Tulkinghorn, "about her?"

"Well sir," returns the stationer, shading his communication with his hat, "it falls a little hard upon me. My domestic happiness is very great—at least, it's as great as can be expected, I'm sure—but my little woman is rather given to jealousy. Not to put too fine a point upon it, she is very much given to jealousy. And you see, a foreign female of that genteel appearance coming into the shop, and hovering—I should be the last to make use of a strong expression, if I could avoid it, but hovering sir—in the court—you know it is—now ain't it? I only put it to yourself sir."

Mr. Snagsby having said this in a very plaintive manner, throws in a cough of general application to fill up all the blanks.

"Why, what do you mean?" asks Mr. Tulkinghorn.

"Just so sir," returns Mr. Snagsby; "I was sure you would feel it yourself, and would excuse the reasonableness of *my* feelings when coupled with the known excitableness of my little woman. You see, the foreign female—which you mentioned her name just now, with quite a native sound I am sure—caught up the word Snagsby that night, being uncommon quick, and made inquiry, and got the direction and come at dinner-time. Now Guster, our young woman, is timid and has fits, and she, taking fright at the foreigner's looks—which are fierce—and at a grinding manner that she has of speaking—which is calculated to alarm a weak mind—gave way to it, instead of bearing up against it, and tumbled down the kitchen stairs out of one into another, such fits as I do sometimes think are never gone into, or come out of, in any house but ours. Consequently there was by good fortune ample occupation for my little woman, and only me to answer the shop. When she *did* say that Mr. Tulkinghorn, being always denied to her by his Employer (which I had no doubt at the time was a foreign mode of viewing a clerk), she would do herself the pleasure of continually calling at my place until she was let in here. Since then she has been, as I began by saying, hovering—Hovering sir," Mr. Snagsby repeats the word with pathetic emphasis, "in the court. The effects of which movement it is impossible to calculate. I shouldn't wonder if it might have already given rise to the painfullest mistakes even in the neighbours' minds, not mentioning (if such a thing was possible) my

in it here to meet that boy—Say! Is it not?" Mademoiselle Hortense makes another spring.

"You are a vixen, a vixen!" Mr. Tulkinghorn seems to meditate, as he looks distrustfully at her; then he replies, "Well, wench, well. I paid you."

"You paid me!" she repeats, with fierce disdain. "Two sovereign! I have not change them, I ref-use them, I des-pise them, I throw them from me!" Which she literally does, taking them out of her bosom as she speaks, and flinging them with such violence on the floor, that they jerk up again into the light before they roll away into corners, and slowly settle down there after spinning vehemently.

"Now!" says Mademoiselle Hortense, darkening her large eyes again. "You have paid me? Eh my God, O yes!"

Mr. Tulkinghorn rubs his head with the key, while she entertains herself with a sarcastic laugh.

"You must be rich, my fair friend," he composedly observes, "to throw money about in that way!"

"I *am* rich," she returns, "I am very rich in hate. I hate my Lady, of all my heart. You know that."

"Know it? How should I know it?"

"Because you have known it perfectly, before you prayed me to give you that information. Because you have known perfectly that I was en-r-r-r-raged!" It appears impossible for Mademoiselle to roll the letter r sufficiently in this word, notwithstanding that she assists her energetic delivery, by clenching both her hands, and setting all her teeth.

"Oh! I knew that, did I?" says Mr. Tulkinghorn, examining the wards of the key.

"Yes, without doubt. I am not blind. You have made sure of me because you knew that. You had reason! I det-est her." Mademoiselle folds her arms, and throws this last remark at him over one of her shoulders.

"Having said this, have you anything else to say, Mademoiselle?"

"I am not yet placed. Place me well. Find me a good condition! If you cannot, or do not choose to do that, employ me to pursue her, to chase her, to disgrace and to dishonour her. I will help you well, and with a good will. It is what *you* do. Do I not know that?"

"You appear to know a good deal," Mr. Tulkinghorn retorts.

"Do I not? Is it that I am so weak as to believe, like a child, that I come here in that dress to rec-eive that boy, only to decide a little bet, a wager?—Eh my God, O yes!" In this reply, down to the word "wager" inclusive, Mademoiselle has been ironically polite and tender; then, as suddenly dashed into the bitterest and most defiant scorn, with her black eyes in one and the same moment very nearly shut, and staringly wide open.

"Now, let us see," says Mr. Tulkinghorn, tapping his chin with the key, and looking imperturbably at her, "how this matter stands."

"Ah! Let us see," Mademoiselle assents, with many angry and tight nods of her head.

"You come here to make a remarkably modest demand, which you have just stated, and it not being conceded, you will come again."

"And again," says Mademoiselle, with more tight and angry nods. "And yet again. And yet again. And many times again. In effect, for ever!"

"And not only here, but you will go to Mr. Snagsby's, too, perhaps? That visit not succeeding either, you will go again perhaps?"

"And again," repeats Mademoiselle, cataleptic with determination. "And yet again. And yet again. And many times again. In effect, for ever!"

"Very well. Now Mademoiselle Hortense, let me recommend you to take the candle and pick up that money of yours. I think you will find it behind the clerk's partition in the corner yonder."

She merely throws a laugh over her shoulder, and stands her ground with folded arms.

"You will not, eh?"

"No, I will not!"

"So much the poorer you; so much the richer I! Look, mistress, this is the key of my wine-cellar. It is a large key, but the keys of prisons are larger. In this city, there are houses of correction (where the treadmills are, for women) the gates of which are very strong and heavy, and no doubt the keys too. I am afraid a lady of your spirit and activity would find it an inconvenience to have one of those keys turned upon her for any length of time. What do you think?"

"I think," Mademoiselle replies, without any action, and in a clear obliging voice, "that you are a miserable wretch."

"Probably," returns Mr. Tulkinghorn, quietly blowing his nose. "But I don't ask what you think of myself; I ask what you think of the prison."

"Nothing. What does it matter to me?"

"Why it matters this much, mistress," says the lawyer, deliberately putting away his handkerchief, and adjusting his frill, "the law is so despotic here, that it interferes to prevent any of our good English citizens from being troubled, even by a lady's visits, against his desire. And, on his complaining that he is so troubled, it takes hold of the troublesome lady, and shuts her up in prison under hard discipline. Turns the key upon her, mistress." Illustrating with the cellar key.

"Truly?" returns Mademoiselle, in the same pleasant voice. "That is droll! But—my faith!—still what does it matter to me?"

"My fair friend," says Mr. Tulkinghorn, "make another visit here, or at Mr. Snagsby's, and you shall learn."

"In that case you will send Me to the prison, perhaps?"

"Perhaps."

It would be contradictory for one in Mademoiselle's state of agreeable jocularity to foam at the mouth, otherwise a tigerish expansion thereabouts might look as if a very little more would make her do it.

"In a word, mistress," says Mr. Tulkinghorn, "I am sorry to be unpolite, but if you ever present yourself uninvited here——or there——again, I will give you over to the police. Their gallantry is great, but they carry troublesome people through the streets in an ignominious manner; strapped down on a board, my good wench."

"I will prove you," whispers Mademoiselle, stretching out her hand, "I will try if you dare to do it!"

"And if," pursues the lawyer, without minding her, "I place you in that good condition of being locked up in jail, it will be some time before you find yourself at liberty again."

"I will prove you," repeats Mademoiselle in her former whisper.

"And now," proceeds the lawyer, still without minding her, "you had better go. Think twice, before you come here again."

"Think you," she answers, "twice two hundred times!"

"You were dismissed by your lady, you know," Mr. Tulkinghorn observes, following her out upon the staircase, "as the most implacable and unmanageable of women. Now turn over a new leaf, and take warning by what I say to you. For what I say, I mean; and what I threaten, I will do, mistress."

She goes down without answering or looking behind her. When she is gone,

s down too; and returning with his cobweb-covered bottle, devotes himself isurely enjoyment of its contents: now and then, as he throws his head n his chair, catching sight of the pertinacious Roman pointing from the

CHAPTER XLIII.

ESTHER'S NARRATIVE.

tters little now, how much I thought of my living mother who had told me re to consider her dead. I could not venture to approach her, or to com- ate with her in writing, for my sense of the peril in which her life was was only to be equalled by my fears of increasing it. Knowing that my xistence as a living creature was an unforeseen danger in her way, I could ways conquer that terror of myself which had seized me when I first knew ret. At no time did I dare to utter her name. I felt as if I did not even o hear it. If the conversation anywhere, when I was present, took that on, as it sometimes naturally did, I tried not to hear—I mentally counted, ed something that I knew, or went out of the room. I am conscious, now, ften did these things when there can have been no danger of her being n of; but I did them in the dread I had of hearing anything that might lead betrayal, and to her betrayal through me.

matters little now how often I recalled the tones of my mother's voice, ired whether I should ever hear it again as I so longed to do, and thought how e and desolate it was that it should be so new to me. It matters little that ched for every public mention of my mother's name; that I passed and ed the door of her house in town, loving it, but afraid to look at it; that I at in the theatre when my mother was there and saw me, and when we were e asunder, before the great company of all degrees, that any link or con- e between us seemed a dream. It is all, all over. My lot has been so blest can relate little of myself which is not a story of goodness and generosity ers. I may well pass that little, and go on.

en we were settled at home again, Ada and I had many conversations with ardian, of which Richard was the theme. My dear girl was deeply grieved e should do their kind cousin so much wrong; but she was so faithful to rd, that she could not bear to blame him, even for that. My guardian was d of it, and never coupled his name with a word of reproof. "Rick is ken, my dear," he would say to her. "Well, well! we have all been mis- over and over again. We must trust to you and time to set him right."

knew afterwards what we suspected then; that he did not trust to time he had often tried to open Richard's eyes. That he had written to him, to him, talked with him, tried every gentle and persuasive art his kindness devise. Our poor devoted Richard was deaf and blind to all. If he were , he would make amends when the Chancery suit was over. If he were g in the dark, he could not do better than do his utmost to clear away clouds in which so much was confused and obscured. Suspicion and mis- standing were the fault of the suit? Then let him work the suit out, and through it to his right mind. This was his unvarying reply. Jarndyce and yce had obtained such possession of his whole nature, that it was impossible ce any consideration before him which he did not—with a distorted kind of —make a new argument in favour of his doing what he did. "So that it is

. . . advising or enc
. . . anything, it is sim
. . .
. . . had just joined us, and now
. . .
. . . inquired my guardian, rubbin
. . .
. . . his head more and mo
. . . sensibility—and- -and
. . . in him, somehow. I suppo
. . . youth, attached too much import
. . . would have balanced and adjust
. . . said my guardian, stopping short
. . . think, you two?"
. . . thought it was a pity he should be
. . .
. . . returned my guardian, hurriedly. "That
. . . I must prevent it. That will never do."
. . . to be regretted that he had ever introd
. . .
. . . with a passing shade of vexatio
. . . There you have the man! Th
. . . He has no idea of the value of
. . . he is good friends with Mr. Vholes, and
. . . nothing by it, and thinks nothing of it.
. . .
. . . guardian, quite triumphant. "There you h
. . . was conscious of any harm in i
. . . mere simplicity. But you sha
. . . understand him better. We must
. . . on these points. Lord bless y

of dilapidation quite equal to our expectation. Two or three of the area railings were gone; the water-butt was broken; the knocker was loose; the bell-handle had been pulled off a long time, to judge from the rusty state of the wire; and dirty footprints on the steps were the only signs of its being inhabited.

A slatternly full-blown girl, who seemed to be bursting out at the rents in her gown and the cracks in her shoes, like an over-ripe berry, answered our knock by opening the door a very little way, and stopping up the gap with her figure. As she knew Mr. Jarndyce (indeed Ada and I both thought that she evidently associated him with the receipt of her wages), she immediately relented and allowed us to pass in. The lock of the door being in a disabled condition, she then applied herself to securing it with the chain which was not in good action either, and said would we go up-stairs?

We went up-stairs to the first floor, still seeing no other furniture than the dirty footprints. Mr. Jarndyce, without further ceremony, entered a room there, and we followed. It was dingy enough, and not at all clean; but furnished with an odd kind of shabby luxury, with a large footstool, a sofa, and plenty of cushions, an easy-chair, and plenty of pillows, a piano, books, drawing materials, music, newspapers, and a few sketches and pictures. A broken pane of glass in one of the dirty windows was papered and wafered over; but there was a little plate of hothouse nectarines on the table, and there was another of grapes, and another of sponge-cakes, and there was a bottle of light wine. Mr. Skimpole himself reclined upon the sofa, in a dressing-gown, drinking some fragrant coffee from an old china cup—it was then about mid-day—and looking at a collection of wallflowers in the balcony.

He was not in the least disconcerted by our appearance, but rose and received us in his usual airy manner.

"Here I am, you see!" he said, when we were seated: not without some little difficulty, the greater part of the chairs being broken. "Here I am! This is my frugal breakfast. Some men want legs of beef and mutton for breakfast; I don't. Give me my peach, my cup of coffee, and my claret; I am content. I don't want them for themselves, but they remind me of the sun. There's nothing solar about legs of beef and mutton. Mere animal satisfaction!"

"This is our friend's consulting room (or would be, if he ever prescribed), his sanctum, his studio," said my guardian to us.

"Yes," said Mr. Skimpole, turning his bright face about, "this is the bird's cage. This is where the bird lives and sings. They pluck his feathers now and then, and clip his wings; but he sings, he sings!"

He handed us the grapes, repeating in his radiant way, "he sings! Not an ambitious note, but still he sings."

"These are very fine," said my guardian. "A present?"

"No," he answered. "No! Some amiable gardener sells them. His man wanted to know, when he brought them last evening, whether he should wait for the money. 'Really, my friend,' I said, 'I think not—if your time is of any value to you.' I suppose it was, for he went away."

My guardian looked at us with a smile, as though he asked us, "is it possible to be worldly with this baby?"

"This is a day," said Mr. Skimpole, gaily taking a little claret in a tumbler, "that will ever be remembered here. We shall call it Saint Clare and Saint Summerson day. You must see my daughters. I have a blue-eyed daughter who is my Beauty daughter, I have a Sentiment daughter, and I have a Comedy daughter. You must see them all. They'll be enchanted."

He was going to summon them, when my guardian interposed, and asked him to pause a moment, as he wished to say a word to him first. "My dear Jarndyce,"

I can't help it. I love him."

The engaging frankness with which he made this declaration, interested appearance, and captivated my guardian; if not, for the

"You are welcome to love him as much as you like," return "but we must save his pocket, Harold."

"Oh!" said Mr. Skimpole. "His pocket? Now, you are don't understand." Taking a little more claret, and dipping it, he shook his head, and smiled at Ada and me with an inge that he never could be made to understand.

"If you go with him here or there," said my guardian, plainl let him pay for both."

"My dear Jarndyce," returned Mr. Skimpole, his genial face comicality of this idea, "what am I to do? If he takes me any And how can *I* pay? I never have any money. If I had an know anything about it. Suppose I say to a man, how much? says to me seven and sixpence? I know nothing about seven an impossible for me to pursue the subject, with any consideration don't go about asking busy people what seven and sixpence is in I don't understand. Why should I go about asking them what s is in Money—which I don't understand?"

"Well," said my guardian, by no means displeased with this you come to any kind of journeying with Rick, you must borrow (never breathing the least allusion to that circumstance), and lea to him."

"My dear Jarndyce," returned Mr. Skimpole, "I will do any pleasure, but it seems an idle form—a superstition. Besides, I g Miss Clare and my dear Miss Summerson, I thought Mr. Carstor rich. I thought he had only to make over something, or to draft, or a cheque, or a bill, or to put something on a file som down a shower of money."

"Indeed it is not so, sir," said Ada. "He is poor."

"No, really?" returned Mr. Skimpole, with his bright smile, "

"And not being the richer for trusting in a rotten reed," laying his hand emphatically on the sleeve of Mr. Skimpole's dr

person, combined with the delightful ease of everything he said exactly to make out my guardian's case. The more I saw of him, the more unlikely it seemed to me, when he was present, that he could design, conceal, or influence anything; and yet the less likely that appeared when he was not present, and the less agreeable it was to think of his having anything to do with any one for whom I cared.

Hearing that his examination (as he called it) was now over, Mr. Skimpole left the room with a radiant face to fetch his daughters (his sons had run away at various times), leaving my guardian quite delighted by the manner in which he had vindicated his childish character. He soon came back, bringing with him the three young ladies and Mrs. Skimpole, who had once been a beauty, but was now a delicate high-nosed invalid, suffering under a complication of disorders.

"This," said Mr. Skimpole, "is my Beauty daughter, Arethusa—plays and sings odds and ends like her father. This is my Sentiment daughter, Laura—plays a little but don't sing. This is my Comedy daughter, Kitty—sings a little but don't play. We all draw a little, and compose a little, and none of us have any idea of time or money."

Mrs. Skimpole sighed, I thought, as if she would have been glad to strike out this item in the family attainments. I also thought that she rather impressed her sigh upon my guardian, and that she took every opportunity of throwing in another.

"It is pleasant," said Mr. Skimpole, turning his sprightly eyes from one to the other of us, "and it is whimsically interesting, to trace peculiarities in families. In this family we are all children, and I am the youngest."

The daughters, who appeared to be very fond of him, were amused by this droll fact; particularly the Comedy daughter.

"My dears, it is true," said Mr. Skimpole, "is it not? So it is, and so it must be, because, like the dogs in the hymn, 'it is our nature to.' Now, here is Miss Summerson with a fine administrative capacity, and a knowledge of details perfectly surprising. It will sound very strange in Miss Summerson's ears, I dare say, that we know nothing about chops in this house. But we don't; not the least. We can't cook anything whatever. A needle and thread we don't know how to use. We admire the people who possess the practical wisdom we want; but we don't quarrel with them. Then why should they quarrel with us? Live, and let live, we say to them. Live upon your practical wisdom, and let us live upon you!"

He laughed, but, as usual, seemed quite candid, and really to mean what he said.

"We have sympathy, my roses," said Mr. Skimpole, "sympathy for everything. Have we not?"

"O yes, papa!" cried the three daughters.

"In fact, that is our family department," said Mr. Skimpole, "in this hurly-burly of life. We are capable of looking on and of being interested, and we *do* look on, and we *are* interested. What more can we do? Here is my Beauty daughter, married these three years. Now, I dare say her marrying another child, and having two more, was all wrong in point of political economy; but it was very agreeable. We had our little festivities on those occasions, and exchanged social ideas. She brought her young husband home one day, and they and their young fledgelings have their nest up-stairs. I dare say, at some time or other, Sentiment and Comedy will bring *their* husbands home, and have *their* nests up-stairs too. So we get on, we don't know how, but somehow."

She looked very young, indeed, to be the mother of two children; and I could not help pitying both her and them. It was evident that the three daughters had grown up as they could, and had had just as little hap-hazard instruction as qualified them to be their father's playthings in his idlest hours. His pictorial tastes were consulted, I observed, in their respective styles of wearing their hair; the Beauty

noment, and ever memorable to me in what ensued from it, was to ore this day was out. Our guest was in such spirits on the way home, l do nothing but listen to him and wonder at him; nor was I alone in la yielded to the same fascination. As to my guardian, the wind, threatened to become fixed in the east when we left Somers Town, pletely round, before we were a couple of miles from it.

of questionable childishness or not, in any other matters, Mr. Skimpole 's enjoyment of change and bright weather. In no way wearied by his ıe road, he was in the drawing-room before any of us; and I heard him o while I was yet looking after my housekeeping, singing refrains of ınd drinking songs, Italian and German, by the score.

all assembled shortly before dinner, and he was still at the piano idly in his luxurious way little strains of music, and talking between whiles ; some sketches of the ruined old Verulam wall, to-morrow, which he a year or two ago and had got tired of; when a card was brought in, ırdian read aloud in a surprised voice:

cester Dedlock!"

or was in the room while it was yet turning round with me, and before ower to stir. If I had had it, I should have hurried away. I had not esence of mind, in my giddiness, to retire to Ada in the window, or to dow, or to know where it was. I heard my name, and found that my as presenting me, before I could move to a chair.

: seated, Sir Leicester."

rndyce," said Sir Leicester in reply, as he bowed and seated himself, :lf the honour of calling here—"

› *me* the honour, Sir Leicester."

you—of calling here on my road from Lincolnshire, to express my any cause of complaint, however strong, that I may have against a who—who is known to you and has been your host, and to whom there- nake no farther reference, should have prevented you, still more ladies escort and charge, from seeing whatever little there may be to gratify l refined taste, at my house, Chesney Wold."

re exceedingly obliging, Sir Leicester, and on behalf of those ladies esent) and for myself, I thank you very much."

ossible, Mr. Jarndyce, that the gentleman to whom, for the reasons I oned I refrain from making further allusion—it is possible, Mr. Jarndyce, ntleman may have done me the honour so far as to misapprehend my ıs to induce you to believe that you would not have been received by my lishment in Lincolnshire with that urbanity, that courtesy, which its re instructed to show to all ladies and gentlemen who present themselves ıse. I merely beg to observe, sir, that the fact is the reverse."

rdian delicately dismissed this remark without making any verbal

given me pain, Mr. Jarndyce," Sir Leicester weightily proceeded. "I sir, it has given—Me—pain—to learn from the housekeeper at Chesney a gentleman who was in your company in that part of the county, and appear to possess a cultivated taste for the Fine Arts, was likewise y some such cause, from examining the family pictures with that leisure, on, that care, which he might have desired to bestow upon them, and e of them might possibly have repaid." Here he produced a card, and much gravity and a little trouble, through his eye-glass, "Mr. Hirrold, -Harold—Skampling—Skumpling—I beg your pardon,—Skimpole."

Mr. Harold Skimpole," said my guardian, evidently surprised.

[illegible] this sentiment highly. "A

[illegible] "A perfectly idle man. A m[illegible]

[illegible] He h[illegible]

[illegible] Mr. Skim[illegible]

[illegible] professed himself much flatter[illegible]

[illegible]" pursued Sir Leicester, addressing

[illegible] to the housekeeper, wh[illegible] as he may h[illegible]

[illegible] of the family—"

[illegible] through the house the other day, o[illegible]

[illegible] Miss Summerson and Miss Clare." Mr.

[illegible]

[illegible] he had formerly been staying

[illegible] to the bearer of that name.

[illegible] for which I have professed m[illegible]

[illegible] any gentleman, Mr. Jarndyce, but es[illegible]

[illegible] Lady Dedlock, and indeed claiming so[illegible]

[illegible] as I learn from my Lady herself[illegible]

[illegible] I assure you, give—Me—pain."

[illegible] Sir Leicester," returned my gua[illegible]

[illegible] we all are, of your consideration. In

[illegible] apologise for it."

[illegible] I had not seen the visitor, and I h[illegible]

[illegible] conversation. It surprises me to find

[illegible] impression on me as it passed. I he[illegible]

[illegible] and my instinctive avoidance o[illegible]

[illegible] distressing to me, that I thought I und[illegible]

[illegible] and the beating of my heart.

[illegible] Lady Dedlock," said Sir Leicest[illegible]

[illegible] she had had the pleasure of exchang[illegible]

[illegible] words, on the occasion of an accidenta[illegible]

[illegible] Permit me, Mr. Jarndyce, to repe[illegible]

[illegible] I have already tendered to Mr. Skim[illegible]

[illegible] my saying that it would afford me an[illegible]

thankful to find, when I went down-stairs again, that they only rallied me ving been shy and mute before the great Lincolnshire baronet.

hat time I had made up my mind that the period was come when I must r guardian what I knew. The possibility of my being brought into contact ay mother, of my being taken to her house,—even of Mr. Skimpole's, how- istantly associated with me, receiving kindnesses and obligations from her ad,—was so painful, that I felt I could no longer guide myself without his nce.

en we had retired for the night, and Ada and I had had our usual talk in etty room, I went out at my door again, and sought my guardian among his . I knew he always read at that hour; and as I drew near, I saw the light g out into the passage from his reading-lamp.

ay I come in, Guardian?"

urely, little woman. What's the matter?"

othing is the matter. I thought I would like to take this quiet time of say- word to you about myself."

put a chair for me, shut his book, and put it by, and turned his kind atten- ce towards me. I could not help observing that it wore that curious expres- had observed in it once before—on that night when he had said that he was rouble which I could readily understand.

hat concerns you, my dear Esther," said he, "concerns us all. You cannot re ready to speak than I am to hear."

know that, Guardian. But I have such need of your advice and support. u don't know how much need I have to-night."

looked unprepared for my being so earnest, and even a little alarmed.

how anxious I have been to speak to you," said I, "ever since the visitor re to-day."

e visitor, my dear! Sir Leicester Dedlock?"

s."

folded his arms, and sat looking at me with an air of the profoundest aston- t, awaiting what I should say next. I did not know how to prepare him.

hy, Esther," said he, breaking into a smile, "our visitor and you are the t persons on earth I should have thought of connecting together!"

yes, Guardian, I know it. And I too, but a little while ago."

smile passed from his face, and he became graver than before. He crossed door to see that it was shut (but I had seen to that), and resumed his seat me.

uardian," said I, "do you remember, when we were overtaken by the r-storm, Lady Dedlock's speaking to you of her sister?"

course. Of course I do."

d reminding you that she and her sister had differed; had 'gone their ways'?"

course."

hy did they separate, Guardian?"

face quite altered as he looked at me. "My child, what questions are these! knew. No one but themselves ever did know, I believe. Who could tell e secrets of those two handsome and proud women were! You have seen Dedlock. If you had ever seen her sister, you would know her to have been lute and haughty as she."

Guardian, I have seen her many and many a time!

en her?"

aused a little, biting his lip. "Then, Esther, when you spoke to me long Boythorn, and when I told you that he was all but married once, and that

the lady did not die, but died to him, and that that time had had its
his later life—did you know it all, and know who the lady was?"

"No, Guardian," I returned, fearful of the light that dimly bro
"Nor do I know yet."

"Lady Dedlock's sister."

"And why," I could scarcely ask him, "why, Guardian, pray tell
they parted?"

"It was her act, and she kept its motives in her inflexible heart. I
did conjecture (but it was mere conjecture), that some injury which
spirit had received in her cause of quarrel with her sister, had wounde
all reason; but she wrote him that from the date of that letter she
as in literal truth she did—and that the resolution was exacted fro
knowledge of his proud temper and his strained sense of honour, whi
her nature too. In consideration for those master points in him, and
sideration for them in herself, she made the sacrifice, she said, and
it and die in it. She did both, I fear: certainly he never saw her,
her from that hour. Nor did any one."

"O Guardian, what have I done!" I cried, giving way to my
sorrow have I innocently caused!"

"You caused, Esther?"

"Yes, Guardian. Innocently, but most surely. That secluded sis
remembrance."

"No, no!" he cried, starting.

"Yes, Guardian, yes! And *her* sister is my mother!"

I would have told him all my mother's letter, but he would not
He spoke so tenderly and wisely to me, and he put so plainly before
myself imperfectly thought and hoped in my better state of mind, th
as I had been with fervent gratitude towards him through so many
lieved I had never loved him so dearly, never thanked him in my he
I did that night. And when he had taken me to my room and kis
door, and when at last I lay down to sleep, my thought was how co
busy enough, how could I ever be good enough, how in my little way
hope to be forgetful enough of myself, devoted enough to him, and
to others, to show him how I blessed and honoured him.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE LETTER AND THE ANSWER.

My guardian called me into his room next morning, and then I told h
been left untold on the previous night. There was nothing to be
but to keep the secret, and to avoid another such encounter as that
He understood my feeling, and entirely shared it. He charged hims
restraining Mr. Skimpole from improving his opportunity. One per
need not name to me, it was not now possible for him to advise or hel
it were; but no such thing could be. If her mistrust of the lawyer w
mentioned were well-founded, which he scarcely doubted, he dread
He knew something of him, both by sight and by reputation, and
that he was a dangerous man. Whatever happened, he repeatedly im
me with anxious affection and kindness, I was as innocent of, as hin
unable to influence.

"Nor do I understand," said he, "that any doubts tend towards you, my dear. Much suspicion may exist without that connexion."

"With the lawyer," I returned. "But two other persons have come into my mind since I have been anxious." Then I told him all about Mr. Guppy, who I feared might have had his vague surmises when I little understood his meaning, but in whose silence after our last interview I expressed perfect confidence.

"Well," said my guardian. "Then we may dismiss him for the present. Who is the other?"

I called to his recollection the French maid, and the eager offer of herself she had made to me.

"Ha!" he returned thoughtfully, "that is a more alarming person than the clerk. But after all, my dear, it was but seeking for a new service. She had seen you and Ada a little while before, and it was natural that you should come into her head. She merely proposed herself for your maid, you know. She did nothing more."

"Her manner was strange," said I.

"Yes, and her manner was strange when she took her shoes off, and showed that cool relish for a walk that might have ended in her death-bed," said my guardian. "It would be useless self-distress and torment to reckon up such chances and possibilities. There are very few harmless circumstances that would not seem full of perilous meaning, so considered. Be hopeful, little woman. You can be nothing better than yourself; be that, through this knowledge, as you were before you had it. It is the best you can do for everybody's sake. I sharing the secret with you——"

"And lightening it, Guardian, so much," said I.

"—Will be attentive to what passes in that family, so far as I can observe it from my distance. And if the time should come when I can stretch out a hand to render the least service to one whom it is better not to name even here, I will not fail to do it for her dear daughter's sake."

I thanked him with my whole heart. What could I ever do but thank him! I was going out at the door, when he asked me to stay a moment. Quickly turning round, I saw that same expression on his face again; and all at once, I don't know how, it flashed upon me as a new and far off possibility that I understood it.

"My dear Esther," said my guardian, "I have long had something in my thoughts that I have wished to say to you."

"Indeed?"

"I have had some difficulty in approaching it, and I still have. I should wish it to be so deliberately said, and so deliberately considered. Would you object to my writing it?"

"Dear Guardian, how could I object to your writing anything for *me* to read?"

"Then see, my love," said he, with his cheery smile; "am I at this moment quite as plain and easy—do I seem as open, as honest and old-fashioned, as I am at any time?"

I answered, in all earnestness, "Quite." With the strictest truth, for his momentary hesitation was gone (it had not lasted a minute), and his fine, sensible, cordial, sterling manner was restored.

"Do I look as if I suppressed anything, meant anything but what I said, had any reservation at all, no matter what?" said he, with his bright clear eyes on mine

I answered, most assuredly he did not.

"Can you fully trust me, and thoroughly rely on what I profess, Esther?"

"Most thoroughly," said I, with my whole heart.

"My dear girl," returned my guardian, "give me your hand."

He took it in his, *holding me lightly with his arm*, and, looking down into my

face with the same genuine freshness and faithfulness of manner—the old protecting manner which had made that house my home in a moment—said, "You have wrought changes in me, little woman, since the winter day in the stage-coach. First and last you have done me a world of good, since that time."

"Ah, Guardian, what have you done for me since that time!"

"But," said he, "that is not to be remembered now."

"It never can be forgotten."

"Yes, Esther," said he, with a gentle seriousness, "it is to be forgotten now; to be forgotten for a while. You are only to remember now, that nothing can change me as you know me. Can you feel quite assured of that, my dear?"

"I can, and I do," I said.

"That's much," he answered. "That's everything. But I must not take that at a word. I will not write this something in my thoughts, until you have quite resolved within yourself that nothing can change me as you know me. If you doubt that in the least degree I will never write it. If you are sure of that, on good consideration, send Charley to me this night week—'for the letter.' But if you are not quite certain, never send. Mind, I trust to your truth, in this thing as in everything. If you are not quite certain on that one point, never send!"

"Guardian," said I, "I am already certain. I can no more be changed in that conviction, than you can be changed towards me. I shall send Charley for the letter."

He shook my hand and said no more. Nor was any more said in reference to this conversation, either by him or me, through the whole week. When the appointed night came, I said to Charley as soon as I was alone, "Go and knock at Mr. Jarndyce's door, Charley, and say you have come from me—'for the letter.'" Charley went up the stairs, and down the stairs, and along the passages—the zig-zag way about the old-fashioned house seemed very long in my listening ears that night—and so came back, along the passages, and down the stairs, and up the stairs, and brought the letter. "Lay it on the table, Charley," said I. So Charley laid it on the table and went to bed, and I sat looking at it without taking it up, thinking of many things.

I began with my overshadowed childhood, and passed through those timid days to the heavy time when my aunt lay dead, with her resolute face so cold and set: and when I was more solitary with Mrs. Rachael, than if I had had no one in the world to speak to or to look at. I passed to the altered days when I was so blest as to find friends in all around me, and to be beloved. I came to the time when I first saw my dear girl, and was received into that sisterly affection which was the grace and beauty of my life. I recalled the first bright gleam of welcome which had shone out of those very windows upon our expectant faces on that cold bright night, and which had never paled. I lived my happy life there over again. I went through my illness and recovery, I thought of myself so altered and of those around me so unchanged; and all this happiness shone like a light from one central figure, represented before me by the letter on the table.

I opened it and read it. It was so impressive in its love for me, and in the unselfish caution it gave me, and the consideration it showed for me in every word, that my eyes were too often blinded to read much at a time. But I read it through three times, before I laid it down. I had thought beforehand that I knew its purport, and I did. It asked me, would I be the mistress of Bleak House.

It was not a love letter though it expressed so much love, but was written just as he would at any time have spoken to me. I saw his face, and heard his voice, and felt the influence of his kind protecting manner, in every line. It addressed me as if our places were reversed; as if all the good deeds had been mine, and all the feelings they had awakened, his. It dwelt on my being young, and he past

: of life; on his having attained a ripe age, while I was a child; on his
) me with a silvered head, and knowing all this so well as to set it in full
e for mature deliberation. It told me that I would gain nothing by such
;e, and lose nothing by rejecting it; for no new relation could enhance
rness in which he held me, and whatever my decision was, he was certain
be right. But he had considered this step anew, since our late confidence,
decided on taking it; if it only served to show me, through one poor
that the whole world would readily unite to falsify the stern prediction of
hood. I was the last to know what happiness I could bestow upon him,
at he said no more; for I was always to remember that I owed him
and that he was my debtor, and for very much. He had often thought
ure; and, foreseeing that the time must come, and fearing that it might
n, when Ada (now very nearly of age) would leave us, and when our pre-
e of life must be broken up, had become accustomed to reflect on this
Thus he made it. If I felt that I could ever give him the best right he
ve to be my protector, and if I felt that I could happily and justly become
companion of his remaining life, superior to all lighter chances and changes
th, even then he could not have me bind myself irrevocably, while this letter
o new to me; but, even then, I must have ample time for reconsideration.
case, or in the opposite case, let him be unchanged in his old relation,
l manner, in the old name by which I called him. And as to his bright
rden and little housekeeper, she would ever be the same, he knew.
as the substance of the letter; written throughout with a justice and a
as if he were indeed my responsible guardian, impartially representing the
of a friend against whom in his integrity he stated the full case.
e did not hint to me, that when I had been better-looking, he had had
: proceeding in his thoughts, and had refrained from it. That when my
was gone from me, and I had no attractions, he could love me just as well
fairer days. That the discovery of my birth gave him no shock. That
osity rose above my disfigurement, and my inheritance of shame. That
I stood in need of such fidelity, the more firmly I might trust in him to

knew it, I knew it well now. It came upon me as the close of the
t history I had been pursuing, and I felt that I had but one thing to do.
te my life to his happiness was to thank him poorly, and what had I
r the other night but some new means of thanking him?
cried very much; not only in the fulness of my heart after reading the
t only in the strangeness of the prospect—for it was strange though I had
the contents—but as if something for which there was no name or distinct
e indefinitely lost to me. I was very happy, very thankful, very hopeful;
d very much.
l-by I went to my old glass. My eyes were red and swollen, and I said,
ss, Esther, can that be you!" I am afraid the face in the glass was
cry again at this reproach, but I held up my finger at it, and it stopped.
t is more like the composed look you comforted me with, my dear, when
red me such a change!" said I, beginning to let down my hair. "When
nistress of Bleak House, you are to be as cheerful as a bird. In fact, you
s to be cheerful; so let us begin for once and for all."
on with my hair now, quite comfortably. I sobbed a little still, but that
use I had been crying; not because I was crying then.
so Esther, my dear, you are happy for life. Happy with your best
appy in your old home, happy in the power of doing a great deal of good,
y in the undeserved love of the best of men."

"Is Charley to bring it?" he asked, pleasantly.

"No. I have brought it myself, Guardian," I returned.

I put my two arms round his neck and kissed him; and he said was this the mistress of Bleak House; and I said yes; and it made no difference presently, and we all went out together, and I said nothing to my precious pet about it.

CHAPTER XLV.

IN TRUST.

ONE morning when I had done jingling about with my baskets of keys, as my beauty and I were walking round and round the garden I happened to turn my eyes towards the house, and saw a long thin shadow going in which looked like Mr. Vholes. Ada had been telling me only that morning, of her hopes that Richard might exhaust his ardour in the Chancery suit by being so very earnest in it; and therefore, not to damp my dear girl's spirits, I said nothing about Mr. Vholes's shadow.

Presently came Charley, lightly winding among the bushes, and tripping along the paths, as rosy and pretty as one of Flora's attendants instead of my maid, saying, "O if you please, miss, would you step and speak to Mr. Jarndyce!"

It was one of Charley's peculiarities, that whenever she was charged with a message she always began to deliver it as soon as she beheld, at any distance, the person for whom it was intended. Therefore I saw Charley, asking me in her usual form of words, to "step and speak" to Mr. Jarndyce, long before I heard her. And when I did hear her, she had said it so often that she was out of breath.

I told Ada I would make haste back, and inquired of Charley, as we went in, whether there was not a gentleman with Mr. Jarndyce? To which Charley, whose grammar, I confess to my shame, never did any credit to my educational powers, replied, "Yes, miss. Him as come down in the country with Mr. Richard."

A more complete contrast than my guardian and Mr. Vholes, I suppose there could not be. I found them looking at one another across a table; the one so open, and the other so close; the one so broad and upright, and the other so narrow and stooping; the one giving out what he had to say in such a rich ringing voice, and the other keeping it in in such a cold-blooded, gasping, fish-like manner; that I thought I never had seen two people so unmatched.

"You know Mr. Vholes, my dear," said my guardian. Not with the greatest urbanity, I must say.

Mr. Vholes rose, gloved and buttoned up as usual, and seated himself again, just as he had seated himself beside Richard in the gig. Not having Richard to look at, he looked straight before him.

"Mr. Vholes," said my guardian, eyeing his black figure, as if he were a bird of ill-omen, "has brought an ugly report of our most unfortunate Rick." Laying a marked emphasis on most unfortunate, as if the words were rather descriptive of his connexion with Mr. Vholes.

I sat down between them; Mr. Vholes remained immovable, except that he secretly picked at one of the red pimples on his yellow face with his black glove.

"And as Rick and *you are happily* good friends, I should like to know," said

my guardian, "what you think, my dear. Would you be so good as to speak up, Mr. Vholes?"

Doing anything but that, Mr. Vholes observed:

"I have been saying that I have reason to know, Miss Summerson, as professional adviser, that Mr. C.'s circumstances are at the present mome embarrassed state. Not so much in point of amount, as owing to the and pressing nature of liabilities Mr. C. has incurred, and the means h liquidating or meeting the same. I have staved off many little matter C.; but there is a limit to staving off, and we have reached it. I ha some advances out of pocket to accommodate these unpleasantnesses, bet sarily look to being repaid, for I do not pretend to be a man of capit have a father to support in the Vale of Taunton, besides striving to rea little independence for three dear girls at home. My apprehension is, circumstances being such, lest it should end in his obtaining leave to pur commission; which at all events is desirable to be made known to his cou

Mr. Vholes, who had looked at me while speaking, here emerged silence he could hardly be said to have broken, so stifled was his tone; a before him again.

"Imagine the poor fellow without even his present resource," said my to me. "Yet what can I do? You know him, Esther. He would nev of help from me, now. To offer it, or hint at it, would be to drive h extremity, if nothing else did."

Mr. Vholes hereupon addressed me again.

"What Mr. Jarndyce remarks, miss, is no doubt the case, and is the I do not see that anything is to be done. I do not say that anything is to Far from it. I merely come down here under the seal of confidence and it, in order that everything may be openly carried on, and that it may n afterwards that everything was not openly carried on. My wish is that e should be openly carried on. I desire to leave a good name behind t consulted merely my own interests with Mr. C., I should not be h insurmountable, as you must well know, would be his objections. Th professional attendance. This can be charged to nobody. I have n in it, except as a member of society and a father—*and* a son," said Mr who had nearly forgotten that point.

It appeared to us that Mr. Vholes said neither more nor less than the intimating that he sought to divide the responsibility, such as it was, of Richard's situation. I could only suggest that I should go down to De Richard was then stationed, and see him, and try if it were possible to worst. Without consulting Mr. Vholes on this point, I took my guardia propose it, while Mr. Vholes gauntly stalked to the fire, and warmed h gloves.

The fatigue of the journey formed an immediate objection on my p part; but as I saw he had no other, and as I was only too happy to go, consent. We had then merely to dispose of Mr. Vholes.

"Well, sir," said Mr. Jarndyce, "Miss Summerson will communic Mr. Carstone, and we can only hope that his position may be yet retrieva will allow me to order you lunch after your journey, sir."

"I thank you, Mr. Jarndyce," said Mr. Vholes, putting out his h sleeve, to check the ringing of the bell, "not any. I thank you, no, not My digestion is much impaired, and I am but a poor knife and fork at If I was to partake of solid food at this period of the day, I don't know consequences might be. Everything having been openly carried on, sir, I with your permission take my leave."

"And I would that you could take your leave, and we could all take our leave, Mr. Vholes," returned my guardian, bitterly, "of a Cause you know of."

Mr. Vholes, whose black dye was so deep from head to foot that it had quite steamed before the fire, diffusing a very unpleasant perfume, made a short one-sided inclination of his head from the neck, and slowly shook it.

"We whose ambition it is to be looked upon in the light of respectable practitioners, sir, can but put our shoulders to the wheel. We do it, sir. At least, I do it myself; and I wish to think well of my professional brethren, one and all. You are sensible of an obligation not to refer to me, miss, in communicating with Mr. C.?"

I said I would be careful not to do it.

"Just so, miss. Good morning. Mr. Jarndyce, good morning, sir." Mr. Vholes put his dead glove, which scarcely seemed to have any hand in it, on my fingers, and then on my guardian's fingers, and took his long thin shadow away. I thought of it on the outside of the coach, passing over all the sunny landscape between us and London, chilling the seed in the ground as it glided along.

Of course it became necessary to tell Ada where I was going, and why I was going; and of course she was anxious and distressed. But she was too true to Richard to say anything but words of pity and words of excuse; and in a more loving spirit still—my dear devoted girl!—she wrote him a long letter, of which I took charge.

Charley was to be my travelling companion, though I am sure I wanted none, and would willingly have left her at home. We all went to London that afternoon, and finding two places in the mail, secured them. At our usual bed-time, Charley and I were rolling away seaward, with the Kentish letters.

It was a night's journey in those coach times; but we had the mail to ourselves, and did not find the night very tedious. It passed with me as I suppose it would with most people under such circumstances. At one while, my journey looked hopeful, and at another hopeless. Now I thought I should do some good, and now I wondered how I could ever have supposed so. Now it seemed one of the most reasonable things in the world that I should have come, and now one of the most unreasonable. In what state I should find Richard, what I should say to him, and what he would say to me, occupied my mind by turns with these two states of feeling; and the wheels seemed to play one tune (to which the burden of my guardian's letter set itself) over and over again all night.

At last we came into the narrow streets of Deal: and very gloomy they were, upon a raw misty morning. The long flat beach, with its little irregular houses, wooden and brick, and its litter of capstans, and great boats, and sheds, and bare upright poles with tackle and blocks, and loose gravelly waste places overgrown with grass and weeds, wore as dull an appearance as any place I ever saw. The sea was heaving under a thick white fog; and nothing else was moving but a few early ropemakers, who, with the yarn twisted round their bodies, looked as if, tired of their present state of existence, they were spinning themselves into cordage.

But when we got into a warm room in an excellent hotel, and sat down, comfortably washed and dressed, to an early breakfast (for it was too late to think of going to bed), Deal began to look more cheerful. Our little room was like a ship's cabin, and that delighted Charley very much. Then the fog began to rise like a curtain; and numbers of ships, that we had had no idea were near, appeared. I don't know how many sail the waiter told us were then lying in the Downs. Some of these vessels were of grand size: one was a large Indiaman just come home: and when the sun shone through the clouds, making silvery pools in the dark sea, the way in *which these* ships brightened, and shadowed, and

[illegible] wrecked and cast on rocks, where they were saved by the intr
of one man. And Charley asking how that could be, I told
some of such a case.

I had thought of sending Richard a note, saying I was th
much better to go to him without preparation. As he live
little doubtful whether this was feasible, but we went out to
in at the gate of the barrack-yard, we found everything very
the morning; and I asked a serjeant standing on the guardh
lived. He sent a man before to show me, who went up s
knocked with his knuckles at a door, and left us.

"Now then!" cried Richard from within. So I left
passage, and going on to the half-open door, said, "Can
It's only Dame Durden."

He was writing at a table, with a great confusion of clothes, t
brushes, and portmanteaus, strewn all about the floor. He
—in plain clothes, I observed, not in uniform—and his hai
he looked as wild as his room. All this I saw after he had h
and I was seated near him, for he started upon hearing my
in his arms in a moment. Dear Richard! He was eve
Down to—ah, poor poor fellow!—to the end, he never r
something of his old merry boyish manner.

"Good Heaven, my dear little woman," said he, "how
Who could have thought of seeing you! Nothing the matt

"Quite well. Lovelier than ever, Richard!"

"Ah!" he said, leaning back in his chair. "My poor co
to you, Esther."

So worn and haggard as he looked, even in the fulness of
leaning back in his chair, and crushing the closely written s
hand!

"Have you been at the trouble of writing all that, and am
all?" I asked.

"Oh my dear," he returned, with a hopeless gesture. "
the whole room. It is all ever here."

I mildly entreated him not to be despondent. I told him

without me than with me. And they are right. Apart from debts and duns, and all such drawbacks, I am not fit even for this employment. I have no care, no mind, no heart, no soul, but for one thing. Why, if this bubble hadn't broken now," he said, tearing the letter he had written into fragments, and moodily casting them away, by driblets, "how could I have gone abroad? I must have been ordered abroad; but how could I have gone? How could I, with my experience of that thing, trust even Vholes unless I was at his back!"

I suppose he knew by my face what I was about to say, but he caught the hand I had laid upon his arm, and touched my own lips with it to prevent me from going on.

"No, Dame Durden! Two subjects I forbid—must forbid. The first is John Jarndyce. The second, you know what. Call it madness, and I tell you I can't help it now, and can't be sane. But it is no such thing; it is the one object I have to pursue. It is a pity I ever was prevailed upon to turn out of my road for any other. It would be wisdom to abandon it now, after all the time, anxiety, and pains I have bestowed upon it! O yes, true wisdom. It would be very agreeable, too, to some people; but I never will."

He was in that mood in which I thought it best not to increase his determination (if anything could increase it) by opposing him. I took out Ada's letter, and put it in his hand.

"Am I to read it now?" he asked.

As I told him yes, he laid it on the table, and, resting his head upon his hand, began. He had not read far, when he rested his head upon his two hands—to hide his face from me. In a little while he rose as if the light were bad, and went to the window. He finished reading it there, with his back towards me; and, after he had finished and had folded it up, stood there for some minutes with the letter in his hand. When he came back to his chair, I saw tears in his eyes.

"Of course, Esther, you know what she says here?" He spoke in a softened voice, and kissed the letter as he asked me.

"Yes, Richard."

"Offers me," he went on, tapping his foot upon the floor, "the little inheritance she is certain of so soon—just as little and as much as I have wasted—and begs and prays me to take it, set myself right with it, and remain in the service."

"I know your welfare to be the dearest wish of her heart," said I. "And O, my dear Richard, Ada's is a noble heart."

"I am sure it is. I—I wish I was dead!"

He went back to the window, and laying his arm across it, leaned his head down on his arm. It greatly affected me to see him so; but I hoped he might become more yielding, and I remained silent. My experience was very limited; I was not at all prepared for his rousing himself out of this emotion to a new sense of injury.

"And this is the heart that the same John Jarndyce, who is not otherwise to be mentioned between us, stepped in to estrange from me," said he, indignantly. "And the dear girl makes me this generous offer from under the same John Jarndyce's roof, and with the same John Jarndyce's gracious consent and connivance, I dare say, as a new means of buying me off."

"Richard!" I cried out, rising hastily, "I will not hear you say such shameful words!" I was very angry with him indeed, for the first time in my life; but it only lasted a moment. When I saw his worn young face looking at me as if he were sorry, I put my hand on his shoulder, and said, "If you please, my dear Richard, do not speak in such a tone to me. Consider!"

He blamed himself exceedingly; and told me in the most generous manner, that he had been very wrong, and that he begged my pardon a thousand times. At that I laughed, but trembled a *little too*, for I was rather fluttered after being so fiery.

"To accept this offer, my dear Esther," said he, sitting down beside
resuming our conversation,—"once more, pray, pray forgive me! I am
grieved—to accept my dearest cousin's offer is, I need not say, impossib
sides, I have letters and papers that I could show you, which would conv
it is all over here. I have done with the red coat, believe me. But it
satisfaction, in the midst of my troubles and perplexities, to know that I
sing Ada's interests in pressing my own. Vholes has his shoulder to th
and he cannot help urging it on as much for her as for me, thank God!"

His sanguine hopes were rising within him, and lighting up his feat
they made his face more sad to me than it had been before.

"No, no!" cried Richard, exultingly. "If every farthing of Ada's
tune were mine, no part of it should be spent in retaining me in what
fit for, can take no interest in, and am weary of. It should be devoted
promises a better return, and should be used where she has a larger stak
be uneasy for me! I shall now have only one thing on my mind, and Vh
I will work it. I shall not be without means. Free of my commission, I
able to compound with some small usurers, who will hear of nothing but th
now—Vholes says so. I should have a balance in my favour anyway,
would swell it. Come, come! You shall carry a letter to Ada from me
and you must both of you be more hopeful of me, and not believe that I
cast away just yet, my dear."

I will not repeat what I said to Richard. I know it was tiresome, an
is to suppose for a moment that it was at all wise. It only came from
He heard it patiently and feelingly; but I saw that on the two subjects h
served, it was at present hopeless to make any representation to him. I
and had experienced in this very interview, the sense of my guardian'
that it was even more mischievous to use persuasion with him than to
as he was.

Therefore I was driven at last to asking Richard if he would mind s
me that it really was all over there, as he had said, and that it was not
impression. He showed me without hesitation a correspondence makin
plain that his retirement was arranged. I found, from what he told me,
Vholes had copies of these papers, and had been in consultation
throughout. Beyond ascertaining this, and having been the bearer of Ad
and being (as I was going to be) Richard's companion back to Lond
done no good by coming down. Admitting this to myself with a reluct
I said I would return to the hotel and wait until he joined me there; an
a cloak over his shoulders and saw me to the gate, and Charley and I w
along the beach.

There was a concourse of people in one spot, surrounding some navv
who were landing from a boat, and pressing about them with unusual in
said to Charley this would be one of the great Indiaman's boats now
stopped to look.

The gentlemen came slowly up from the waterside, speaking good-hu
to each other and to the people around, and glancing about them as if t
glad to be in England again. "Charley, Charley!" said I, "come awa
I hurried on so swiftly that my little maid was surprised.

It was not until we were shut up in our cabin-room, and I had had tim
breath, that I began to think why I had made such haste. In one of
burnt faces I had recognised Mr. Allan Woodcourt, and I had been afr
recognising me. I had been unwilling that he should see my altered
had been taken by surprise, and my courage had quite failed me.

But I knew this would not do, and I now said to myself, "My dear, th

–there is and there can be no reason at all—why it should be worse for
r, than it ever has been. What you were last month, you are to-day; you
worse, you are no better. This is not your resolution; call it up, Esther,
up!" I was in a great tremble—with running—and at first was quite
to calm myself; but I got better, and I was very glad to know it.
party came to the hotel. I heard them speaking on the staircase. I was
was the same gentlemen because I knew their voices again—I mean I knew
oodcourt's. It would still have been a great relief to me to have gone
ithout making myself known, but I was determined not to do so. "No,
r, no. No, no, no!"
ied my bonnet, and put my veil half up—I think I mean half down, but
rs very little—and wrote on one of my cards that I happened to be there
r. Richard Carstone; and I sent it in to Mr. Woodcourt. He came imme-
I told him I was rejoiced to be by chance among the first to welcome
me to England. And I saw that he was very sorry for me.
u have been in shipwreck and peril since you left us, Mr. Woodcourt."
"but we can hardly call that a misfortune which enabled you to be so use-
so brave. We read of it with the truest interest. It first came to my
dge through your old patient, poor Miss Flite, when I was recovering from
ere illness."
! little Miss Flite!" he said. "She lives the same life yet?"
t the same."
s so comfortable with myself now, as not to mind the veil, and to be able
it aside.
r gratitude to you, Mr. Woodcourt, is delightful. She is a most affec-
creature, as I have reason to say."
u—you have found her so?" he returned. "I—I am glad of that." He
very sorry for me that he could scarcely speak.
ssure you," said I, "that I was deeply touched by her sympathy and plea-
the time I have referred to."
as grieved to hear that you had been very ill."
as very ill."
t you have quite recovered?"
ave quite recovered my health and my cheerfulness," said I. "You know
od my guardian is, and what a happy life we lead; and I have everything
ankful for, and nothing in the world to desire."
t as if he had greater commiseration for me than I had ever had for my-
t inspired me with new fortitude, and new calmness, to find that it was I
s under the necessity of reassuring him. I spoke to him of his voyage
l home, and of his future plans, and of his probable return to India. He
at was very doubtful. He had not found himself more favoured by
there, than here. He had gone out a poor ship's surgeon, and had come
nothing better. While we were talking, and when I was glad to believe
had alleviated (if I may use such a term) the shock he had had in seeing
ichard came in. He had heard down-stairs who was with me, and they
h cordial pleasure.
r that after their first greetings were over, and when they spoke of Richard's
Mr. Woodcourt had a perception that all was not going well with him.
quently glanced at his face, as if there were something in it that gave him
and more than once he looked towards me, as though he sought to ascer-
ether I knew what the truth was. Yet Richard was in one of his sanguine
and in good spirits; and was thoroughly pleased to see Mr. Woodcourt,
whom he had always liked.

CHAPTER XLVI.

STOP HIM!

rests upon Tom-all-Alone's. Dilating and dilating since the sun went ight, it has gradually swelled until it fills every void in the place. For a were some dungeon lights burning, as the lamp of Life burns in Tom- , heavily, heavily, in the nauseous air, and winking—as that lamp, too, om-all-Alone's—at many horrible things. But they are blotted out. has eyed Tom with a dull cold stare, as admitting some puny emulation in his desert region unfit for life and blasted by volcanic fires; but she on, and is gone. The blackest nightmare in the infernal stables Tom-all-Alone's, and Tom is fast asleep.

ighty speech-making there has been, both in and out of Parliament, Tom, and much wrathful disputation how Tom shall be got right. e shall be put into the main road by constables, or by beadles, or by , or by force of figures, or by correct principles of taste, or by h, or by low church, or by no church; whether he shall be set to usses of polemical straws with the crooked knife of his mind, or shall be put to stone-breaking instead. In the midst of which dust there is but one thing perfectly clear, to wit, that Tom only may and ll and will, be reclaimed according to somebody's theory but nobody's And in the hopeful meantime, Tom goes to perdition head foremost in rmined spirit.

has his revenge. Even the winds are his messengers, and they serve e hours of darkness. There is not a drop of Tom's corrupted blood ates infection and contagion somewhere. It shall pollute, this very choice stream (in which chemists on analysis would find the genuine a Norman house, and his Grace shall not be able to say Nay to the lliance. There is not an atom of Tom's slime, not a cubic inch of any gas in which he lives, not one obscenity or degradation about him, orance, not a wickedness, not a brutality of his committing, but shall tribution, through every order of society, up to the proudest of the to the highest of the high. Verily, what with tainting, plundering, g, Tom has his revenge.

oot point whether Tom-all-Alone's be uglier by day or by night; but ument that the more that is seen of it the more shocking it must be, and t of it left to the imagination is at all likely to be made so bad as the carries it. The day begins to break now; and in truth it might be he national glory even that the sun should sometimes set upon the British than that it should ever rise upon so vile a wonder as Tom.

sunburnt gentleman, who appears in some inaptitude for sleep to be abroad rather than counting the hours on a restless pillow, strolls at this quiet time. Attracted by curiosity, he often pauses and looks up and down the miserable by-ways. Nor is he merely curious, for in lark eye there is compassionate interest; and as he looks here and there, understand such wretchedness, and to have studied it before.

anks of the stagnant channel of mud which is the main street of Tom- , nothing is to be seen but the crazy houses, shut up and silent. No ature save himself appears, except in one direction, where he sees the re of a woman sitting on a door-step. He walks that way. As- he observes that she has journeyed a long distance, and is footsore and

"Yes, I know something of it. And now I will ask you a question in return. Have you money for your lodging?"

"Yes sir," she says, "really and truly." And she shows it. He tells her, in acknowledgment of her many subdued thanks, that she is very welcome, gives her good day, and walks away. Tom-all-Alone's is still asleep, and nothing is astir.

Yes, something is! As he retraces his way to the point from which he descried the woman at a distance sitting on the step, he sees a ragged figure coming very cautiously along, crouching close to the soiled walls—which the wretchedest figure might as well avoid—and furtively thrusting a hand before it. It is the figure of a youth, whose face is hollow, and whose eyes have an emaciated glare. He is so intent on getting along unseen, that even the apparition of a stranger in whole garments does not tempt him to look back. He shades his face with his ragged elbow as he passes on the other side of the way, and goes shrinking and creeping on, with his anxious hand before him, and his shapeless clothes hanging in shreds. Clothes made for what purpose, or of what material, it would be impossible to say. They look, in colour and in substance, like a bundle of rank leaves of swampy growth, that rotted long ago.

Allan Woodcourt pauses to look after him and note all this, with a shadowy belief that he has seen the boy before. He cannot recall how, or where; but there is some association in his mind with such a form. He imagines that he must have seen it in some hospital or refuge; still, cannot make out why it comes with any special force on his remembrance.

He is gradually emerging from Tom-all-Alone's in the morning light, thinking about it, when he hears running feet behind him; and looking round, sees the boy scouring towards him at great speed, followed by the woman.

"Stop him, stop him!" cries the woman, almost breathless. "Stop him, sir!"

He darts across the road into the boy's path, but the boy is quicker than he—makes a curve—ducks—dives under his hands—comes up half-a-dozen yards beyond him, and scours away again. Still, the woman follows, crying, "Stop him, sir, pray stop him!" Allan, not knowing but that he has just robbed her of her money, follows in chase, and runs so hard, that he runs the boy down a dozen times; but each time he repeats the curve, the duck, the dive, and scours away again. To strike at him, on any of these occasions, would be to fell and disable him; but the pursuer cannot resolve to do that; and so the grimly ridiculous pursuit continues. At last the fugitive, hard-pressed, takes to a narrow passage, and a court which has no thoroughfare. Here, against a hoarding of decaying timber, he is brought to bay, and tumbles down, lying gasping at his pursuer, who stands and gasps at him until the woman comes up.

"O you, Jo!" cries the woman. "What? I have found you at last!"

"Jo," repeats Allan, looking at him with attention, "Jo! Stay. To be sure! I recollect this lad some time ago being brought before the Coroner."

"Yes, I see you once afore at the Inkwhich," whimpers Jo. "What of that? Can't you never let such an unfortnet as me alone? An't I unfortnet enough for you yet? How unfortnet do you want me fur to be? I've been a chivied and a chivied, fust by one on you and nixt by another on you, till I'm worritted to skins and bones. The Inkwhich warn't *my* fault. *I* done nothink. He wos wery good to me, he wos; he wos the only one I knowed to speak to, as ever come across my crossing. It ain't wery likely I should want him to be Inkwhich'd. I only wish I wos, myself. I don't know why I don't go and make a hole in the water, I'm sure I don't."

He says it with such a pitiable air, and his grimy tears appear so real, and he lies in the corner up against the hoarding so like a growth of fungus or any unwholesome excrescence produced there in neglect and impurity, that Allan Wood-

Allan shrinks back from him with a

"Yes sir, yes. Took him home, and
less monster he ran away in the night,
till I set eyes on him just now. And th
caught his illness, lost her beautiful loc
same young lady now, if it wasn't for h
her sweet voice. Do you know it? Y
this is all along of you and of her goodn
ning to rage at him as she recalls it, and

The boy, in rough sort stunned by w
forehead with his dirty palm, and to sta
head to foot until the crazy hoarding aga

Allan restrains the woman, merely by

"Richard told me," he falters, "—I n
for a moment, I will speak presently."

He turns away, and stands for a wh
When he comes back, he has recovered
against an avoidance of the boy, which i
woman's attention.

"You hear what she says. But get up

Jo, shaking and chattering, slowly ris
tribe in a difficulty, sideways against the h
against it, and covertly rubbing his right
his right.

"You hear what she says, and I kno
since?"

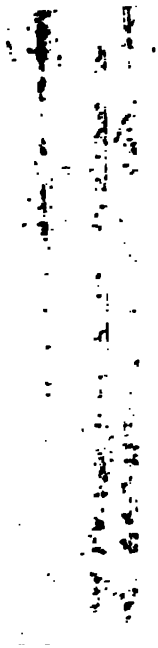
"Wishermaydie if I seen Tom-all-Alon
hoarsely.

"Why have you come here now?"

Jo looks all round the confined court, l
knees, and finally answers:

Tramp then," says Jo.
Now, tell me," proceeds Allan, making a strong effort to overcome his re-
iance, going very near to him, and leaning over him with an expression of
idence, "tell me how it came about that you left that house, when the good
ig lady had been so unfortunate as to pity you, and take you home."
suddenly comes out of his resignation, and excitedly declares, addressing the
an, that he never known about the young lady, that he never heern about it,
he never went fur to hurt her, that he would sooner have hurt his own self,
he'd sooner have had his unfortnet ed chopped off than ever gone a-nigh her,
that she wos wery good to him, she wos. Conducting himself throughout as
his poor fashion he really meant it, and winding up with some very miserable

llan Woodcourt sees that this is not a sham. He constrains himself to touch
"Come Jo. Tell me."
No. I dustn't," says Jo, relapsing into the profile state. "I dustn't, or I
id."
But I must know," returns the other, "all the same. Come Jo."
fter two or three such adjurations, Jo lifts up his head again, looks round the
t again, and says in a low voice, "Well, I'll tell you something. I was took
y. There!"
Took away? In the night?"
Ah!" Very apprehensive of being overheard, Jo looks about him, and even
ces up some ten feet at the top of the hoarding, and through the cracks in it,
the object of his distrust should be looking over, or hidden on the other side.
Who took you away?"
I dustn't name him," says Jo. "I dustn't do it, sir."
But I want, in the young lady's name, to know. You may trust me. No one
shall hear."
Ah, but I don't know," replies Jo, shaking his head fearfully, "as he *don't* hear."
Why, he is not in this place."
Oh, ain't he though?" says Jo. "He's in all manner of places, all at wanst."
llan looks at him in perplexity, but discovers some real meaning and good
at the bottom of this bewildering reply. He patiently awaits an explicit
wer; and Jo, more baffled by his patience than by anything else, at last
erately whispers a name in his ear.
Aye!" says Allan. "Why, what had you been doing?"
Nothink, sir. Never done nothink to get myself into no trouble, 'sept in not
ing on and the Inkwhich. But I'm a-moving on now. I'm a-moving on to
berryin ground—that's the move as I'm up to."
No, no, we will try to prevent that. But what did he do with you?"
Put me in a horsepittle," replied Jo, whispering, "till I was discharged, then
me a little money—four half bulls, wot you may call halfcrowns—and ses
ook it! Nobody wants you here,' he ses. 'You hook it. You go and tramp,'
es. 'You move on,' he ses. 'Don't let me ever see you nowheres within
y mile of London, or you'll repent it.' So I shall, if ever he does see me, and
see me if I'm above ground," concludes Jo, nervously repeating all his former
autions and investigations.
llan considers a little; then remarks, turning to the woman, but keeping an
uraging eye on Jo: "He is not so ungrateful as you supposed. He had a
on for going away, though it was an insufficient one."
Thank'ee, sir, thank'ee!" exclaims Jo. "There now! See how hard you
upon me. But ony you tell the young lady wot the gentlman ses, and it's all
t. Fur *you* was wery good to me too, and I knows it."



wot the genimn ses!" nods and shan
half laughs and half cries, a farewell t
Allan Woodcourt, close to the house
order, the two come up out of Tom-al
and the purer air.

CHAPT

JO'

As Allan Woodcourt and Jo proceed
spires and the distances are so near an
itself seems renewed by rest. Allan re
bestow his companion. "It surely is
heart of a civilised world this creature
dispose of than an unowned dog." B
strangeness, and the difficulty remains.

At first, he looks behind him ofte
following. But look where he will, h
houses, making his way with his wary h
door, and often, as he creeps along,
satisfied that the last thing in his thoug
considering with a less divided attentio

A breakfast-stall at a street corner su
there, looks round, and beckons Jo. J
up, slowly scooping the knuckles of his
palm of his left—kneading dirt with a n
repast to Jo is then set before him, and
the bread-and-butter; looking anxiously

portion of it very carefully. He begins to revive, almost as soon as it passes his lips. "We may repeat that dose, Jo," observes Allan, after watching him with his attentive face. "So! Now we will take five minutes' rest, and then go on again."

Leaving the boy sitting on the bench of the breakfast-stall, with his back against an iron railing, Allan Woodcourt paces up and down in the early sunshine, casting an occasional look towards him without appearing to watch him. It requires no discernment to perceive that he is warmed and refreshed. If a face so shaded can brighten, his face brightens somewhat; and, by little and little, he eats the slice of bread he had so hopelessly laid down. Observant of these signs of improvement, Allan engages him in conversation; and elicits to his no small wonder the adventure of the lady in the veil, with all its consequences. Jo slowly munches, as he slowly tells it. When he has finished his story and his bread, they go on again.

Intending to refer his difficulty in finding a temporary place of refuge for the boy, to his old patient, zealous little Miss Flite, Allan leads the way to the court where he and Jo first foregathered. But all is changed at the rag and bottle shop; Miss Flite no longer lodges there; it is shut up; and a hard-featured female, much obscured by dust, whose age is a problem—but who is indeed no other than the interesting Judy—is tart and spare in her replies. These sufficing, however, to inform the visitor that Miss Flite and her birds are domiciled with a Mrs. Blinder, in Bell Yard, he repairs to that neighbouring place; where Miss Flite (who rises early that she may be punctual at the Divan of justice held by her excellent friend the Chancellor) comes running down-stairs, with tears of welcome and with open arms.

"My dear physician!" cries Miss Flite. "My meritorious, distinguished, honourable officer!" She uses some odd expressions, but is as cordial and full of heart as sanity itself can be—more so than it often is. Allan, very patient with her, waits until she has no more raptures to express; then points out Jo, trembling in a door-way, and tells her how he comes there.

"Where can I lodge him hereabouts for the present? Now you have a fund of knowledge and good sense, and can advise me."

Miss Flite, mighty proud of the compliment, sets herself to consider; but it is long before a bright thought occurs to her. Mrs. Blinder is entirely let, and she herself occupies poor Gridley's room. "Gridley!" exclaims Miss Flite, clapping her hands, after a twentieth repetition of this remark. "Gridley! To be sure! of course! My dear physician! General George will help us out."

It is hopeless to ask for any information about General George, and would be, though Miss Flite had not already run up-stairs to put on her pinched bonnet and her poor little shawl, and to arm herself with her reticule of documents. But as she informs her physician, in her disjointed manner, on coming down in full array, that General George, whom she often calls upon, knows her dear Fitz-Jarndyce, and takes a great interest in all connected with her, Allan is induced to think that they may be in the right way. So he tells Jo, for his encouragement, that this walking about will soon be over now; and they repair to the General's. Fortunately it is not far.

From the exterior of George's Shooting Gallery, and the long entry, and the bare perspective beyond it, Allan Woodcourt augurs well. He also descries promise in the figure of Mr. George himself, striding towards them in his morning exercise with his pipe in his mouth, no stock on, and his muscular arms developed by broadsword and dumb-bell, weightily asserting themselves through his light shirt-sleeves.

"Your servant, sir," says Mr. George, with a military salute. Good

humouredly smiling all over his broad forehead up into his crisp defers to Miss Flite, as, with great stateliness, and at some length the courtly ceremony of presentation. He winds it up with an servant, sir!" and another salute.

"Excuse me, sir. A sailor, I believe?" says Mr. George.

"I am proud to find I have the air of one," returns Allan; "but sea-going doctor."

"Indeed, sir! I should have thought you was a regular blue-jacke

Allan hopes Mr. George will forgive his intrusion the more rea account, and particularly that he will not lay aside his pipe, which, ness, he has testified some intention of doing. "You are very good, the trooper. "As I know, by experience, that it's not disagreeable t and since it's equally agreeable to yourself——" and finishes the putting it between his lips again. Allan proceeds to tell him all he Jo; unto which the trooper listens with a grave face.

"And that's the lad, sir, is it?" he inquires, looking along the e Jo stands staring up at the great letters on the whitewashed front, no meaning in his eyes.

"That's he," says Allan. "And, Mr. George, I am in this di him. I am unwilling to place him in a hospital, even if I could immediate admission, because I foresee that he would not stay there it he could be so much as got there. The same objection applies to supposing I had the patience to be evaded and shirked, and handed post to pillar in trying to get him into one—which is a system that kindly to."

"No man does, sir," returns Mr. George.

"I am convinced that he would not remain in either place, becau sessed by an extraordinary terror of this person who ordered him t the way; in his ignorance, he believes this person to be everywhere, of everything."

"I ask your pardon, sir," says Mr. George. "But you have not m party's name. Is it a secret, sir?"

"The boy makes it one. But his name is Bucket."

"Bucket the Detective, sir?"

"The same man."

"The man is known to me, sir," returns the trooper, after blowing of smoke, and squaring his chest; "and the boy is so far correct that he is a—rum customer." Mr. George smokes with a profound meanin and surveys Miss Flite in silence.

"Now, I wish Mr. Jarndyce and Miss Summerson at least to k Jo, who tells so strange a story, has re-appeared; and to have it in t speak with him, if they should desire to do so. Therefore I want to the present moment, into any poor lodging kept by decent people, wh be admitted. Decent people and Jo, Mr. George," says Allan, f direction of the trooper's eyes along the entry, "have not been much as you see. Hence the difficulty. Do you happen to know any neighbourhood, who would receive him for a while, on my pay beforehand?"

As he puts the question, he becomes aware of a dirty-faced little m at the trooper's elbow, and looking up, with an oddly twisted figure nance, into the trooper's face. After a few more puffs at his pipe, looks down askant at the little man, and the little man winks up at th

"Well, sir," says Mr. George, "I can assure you that I would

a the head at any time, if it would be at all agreeable to Miss Sum-
id consequently I esteem it a privilege to do that young lady any service,
nall. We are naturally in the vagabond way here, sir, both myself and
see what the place is. You are welcome to a quiet corner of it for the
same would meet your views. No charge made, except for rations.
t in a flourishing state of circumstances here, sir. We are liable to be
it neck and crop, at a moment's notice. However, sir, such as the place
ong as it lasts, here it is at your service."
comprehensive wave of his pipe, Mr. George places the whole building
or's disposal.
it for granted, sir," he adds, "you being one of the medical staff, that
present infection about this unfortunate subject?"
quite sure of it.
e, sir," says Mr. George, shaking his head sorrowfully, "we have had
that."
is no less sorrowfully echoed by his new acquaintance. "Still I am
ell you," observes Allan, after repeating his former assurance, "that the
lorably low and reduced; and that he may be—I do not say that he is
one to recover."
u consider him in present danger, sir?" inquires the trooper.
fear so."
sir," returns the trooper, in a decisive manner, "it appears to me—being
a the vagabond way myself—that the sooner he comes out of the street,
You Phil! Bring him in!"
od tacks out, all on one side, to execute the word of command; and the
ving smoked his pipe, lays it by. Jo is brought in. He is not one of
iggle's Tockahoopo Indians; he is not one of Mrs. Jellyby's lambs,
lly unconnected with Borrioboola-Gha; he is not softened by distance
iliarity; he is not a genuine foreign-grown savage; he is the ordinary
e article. Dirty, ugly, disagreeable to all the senses, in body a common
f the common streets, only in soul a heathen. Homely filth begrimes
ly parasites devour him, homely sores are in him, homely rags are on
ve ignorance, the growth of English soil and climate, sinks his immortal
er than the beasts that perish. Stand forth, Jo, in uncompromising
From the sole of thy foot to the crown of thy head, there is nothing
about thee.
fles slowly into Mr. George's gallery, and stands huddled together in a
oking all about the floor. He seems to know that they have an inclina-
ink from him, partly for what he is, and partly for what he has caused.
hrinks from them. He is not of the same order of things, not of the
in creation. He is of no order and no place; neither of the beasts,
anity.
here, Jo!" says Allan. "This is Mr. George."
hes the floor for some time longer, then looks up for a moment, and then
n.
a kind friend to you, for he is going to give you lodging room here."
s a scoop with one hand, which is supposed to be a bow. After a little
deration, and some backing and changing of the foot on which he rests,
that he is "wery thankful."
re quite safe here. All you have to do at present is to be obedient, and
ng. And mind you tell us the truth here, whatever you do, Jo."
rmaydie if I don't, sir," says Jo, reverting to his favourite declaration.
done nothink yit, but wot you knows on, to get myself into no trouble.

I never was in no other trouble at all, sir—'sept not knowin' nothink an
wation."

"I believe it. Now attend to Mr. George. I see he is going to speak t

"My intention merely was, sir," observes Mr. George, amazingly broad a
right, "to point out to him where he can lie down, and get a thorough goo
of sleep. Now, look here." As the trooper speaks, he conducts them
other end of the gallery, and opens one of the little cabins. "There you a
see! Here is a mattress, and here you may rest, on good behaviour, as I
Mr., I ask you pardon, sir;" he refers apologetically to the card Allan ha
him; "Mr. W [illegible] Don't you be alarmed if you hear shots;
be aimed at th [illegible] ow, there's another thing I would
mend, sir," [illegible] is visitor. "Phil, come here!"

Phil bear [illegible] to his usual tactics.

"Here is [illegible] hen a baby, in the gutter. Conseq
it is to be [illegible] l interest in this poor creature. Y
don't you [illegible]

"Certa[illegible] is Phil's reply.

"Now I v [illegible] George, in a martial sort of confi
as if he were [illegible] cil of war at a drum-head, "that
man was to tal[illegible] to lay out a few shillings in gettin
one or two coarse articles——

"Mr. George, my considerate friend," returns Allan, taking out his
"it is the very favour I would have asked."

Phil Squod and Jo are sent out immediately on this work of improv
Miss Flite, quite enraptured by her success, makes the best of her way to
having great fears that otherwise her friend the Chancellor may be uneasy
her, or may give the judgment she has so long expected, in her absenc
observing "which you know, my dear physician, and general, after so many
would be too absurdly unfortunate!" Allan takes the opportunity of goi
to procure some restorative medicines; and obtaining them near at hand
returns, to find the trooper walking up and down the gallery, and to fall in
and walk with him.

"I take it, sir," says Mr. George, "that you know Miss Summerson
well?"

Yes, it appears.

"Not related to her, sir?"

No, it appears.

"Excuse the apparent curiosity," says Mr. George. "It seemed to me
ble that you might take more than a common interest in this poor creature, b
Miss Summerson had taken that unfortunate interest in him. 'Tis *my* cas
assure you."

"And mine, Mr. George."

The trooper looks sideways at Allan's sun-burnt cheek and bright da
rapidly measures his height and build, and seems to approve of him.

"Since you have been out, sir, I have been thinking that I unquest
know the rooms in Lincoln's Inn Fields, where Bucket took the lad, accor
his account. Though he is not acquainted with the name, I can help yo
It's Tulkinghorn. That's what it is."

Allan looks at him inquiringly, repeating the name.

"Tulkinghorn. That's the name, sir. I know the man; and know
have been in communication with Bucket before, respecting a deceased
who had given him offence. *I* know the man, sir. To my sorrow."

Allan naturally asks what kind of man he is?

kind of man! Do you mean to look at?"
I know that much of him. I mean to deal with. Generally, what
n?"
then I'll tell you, sir," returns the trooper, stopping short, and folding
his square chest, so angrily, that his face fires and flushes all over;
onfoundedly bad kind of man. He is a slow-torturing kind of man.
nore like flesh and blood, than a rusty old carbine is. He is a kind of
eorge!—that has caused me more restlessness, and more uneasiness,
issatisfaction with myself, than all other men put together. That's the
n Mr. Tulkinghorn is!"
orry," says Allan, "to have touched so sore a place."
The trooper plants his legs wider apart, wets the palm of his broad
and lays it on the imaginary moustache. "It's no fault of yours, sir;
ll judge. He has got a power over me. He is the man I spoke of
being able to tumble me out of this place neck and crop. He keeps
nstant see-saw. He won't hold off, and he won't come on. If I have
to make him, or time to ask him for, or anything to go to him about,
e me, don't hear me—passes me on to Melchisedechs' in Clifford's Inn,
ch's in Clifford's Inn passes me back again to him—he keeps me
d dangling about him, as if I was made of the same stone as himself.
nd half my life now, pretty well, loitering and dodging about his door.
he care? Nothing. Just as much as the rusty old carbine I have
him to. He chafes and goads me, till—Bah! nonsense—I am for-
elf. Mr. Woodcourt;" the trooper resumes his march; "all I say is,
man; but I am glad I shall never have the chance of setting spurs to
nd riding at him in a fair field. For if I had that chance, in one of
s he drives me into—he'd go down, sir!"
ge has been so excited, that he finds it necessary to wipe his forehead
-sleeve. Even while he whistles his impetuosity away with the National
me involuntary shakings of his head and heavings of his chest still
nd; not to mention an occasional hasty adjustment with both hands of
hirt-collar, as if it were scarcely open enough to prevent his being
a choking sensation. In short, Allan Woodcourt has not much doubt
oing down of Mr. Tulkinghorn on the field referred to.
is conductor presently return, and Jo is assisted to his mattress by the
l; to whom, after due administration of medicine by his own hands,
des all needful means and instructions. The morning is by this time
apace. He repairs to his lodgings to dress and breakfast; and then,
king rest, goes away to Mr. Jarndyce to communicate his discovery.
n Mr. Jarndyce returns alone, confidentially telling him that there are
keeping this matter very quiet indeed; and showing a serious interest
Mr. Jarndyce, Jo repeats in substance what he said in the morning;
y material variation. Only, that cart of his is heavier to draw, and
a hollower sound.
e lay here quiet, and not be chivied no more," falters Jo; "and be so
erson as is a-passin' nigh where I used fur to sweep, as jist to say to
by that Jo, wot he known once, is a-moving on right forards with his
'll be wery thankful. I'd be more thankful than I am aready, if it wos
ossible for an unfortnet to be it."
s so many of these references to the law-stationer in the course of a
, that Allan, after conferring with Mr. Jarndyce, good-naturedly resolves
nok's Court; the rather, as the cart seems to be breaking down.
's Court, therefore, he repairs. Mr. Snagsby is behind his counter in

his grey coat and sleeves, inspecting an Indenture of several skins which come in from the engrosser's; an immense desert of law-hand and par with here and there a resting-place of a few large letters, to break the awfu tony, and save the traveller from despair. Mr. Snagsby puts up at one inky wells, and greets the stranger with his cough of general prepara business.

"You don't remember me, Mr. Snagsby?"

The stationer's heart begins to thump heavily, for his old apprehensio never abated. It is as much as he can do to answer, "No, sir, I can't s I should have c o fine a point upon it—that I ne you before, sir."

"Twice lcourt. "Once at a poor bedsi once ——"

"It's com ted stationer, as recollection brea him. "It's going to burst!" But, he has s presence of nto the little counting-house, and the door.

"Are you a

"No, I am .

"Would you make the gh single," says Mr. Snagsby, in a choly whisper, "to speak as low as you can? For my little woman is a-l somewheres, or I'll forfeit the business and five hundred pound!"

In deep dejection Mr. Snagsby sits down on his stool, with his back ag desk, protesting:

"I never had a secret of my own, sir. I can't charge my memory w having once attempted to deceive my little woman on my own account, s named the day. I wouldn't have done it, sir. Not to put too fine a po it, I couldn't have done it, I dursn't have done it. Whereas, and nevertl find myself wrapped round with secrecy and mystery, till my life is a b me."

His visitor professes his regret to hear it, and asks him does he remem Mr. Snagsby answers with a suppressed groan. O don't he!

"You couldn't name an individual human being—except myself—that woman is more set and determined against than Jo," says Mr. Snagsby.

Allan asks why?

"Why?" repeats Mr. Snagsby, in his desperation clutching at the c hair at the back of his bald head. "How should *I* know why? But y single person, sir, and may you long be spared to ask a married perso question!"

With this beneficent wish, Mr. Snagsby coughs a cough of dismal resi and submits himself to hear what the visitor has to communicate.

"There again!" says Mr. Snagsby, who, between the earnestness of his and the suppressed tones of his voice, is discoloured in the face. "At it ag new direction! A certain person charges me, in the solemnest way, not t Jo to any one, even my little woman. Then comes another certain perso person of yourself, and charges me, in an equally solemn way, not to me to that other certain person above all other persons. Why, this is a asylum! Why, not to put too fine a point upon it, this is Bedlam, sir!" Snagsby.

But it is better than he expected, after all; being no explosion of the mi him, or deepening of the pit into which he has fallen. And being tender- and affected by the account he hears of Jo's condition, he readily engages round" as early in the evening as he can manage it quietly. He looks ro

when the evening comes; but it may turn out that Mrs. Snagsby is as quiet
ger as he.
very glad to see his old friend; and says, when they are left alone, that he
uncommon kind as Mr. Sangsby should come so far out of his way on ac-
of sich as him. Mr. Snagsby, touched by the spectacle before him, imme-
lays upon the table half-a-crown: that magic balsam of his for all kinds of
.
d how do you find yourself, my poor lad?" inquires the stationer, with his
of sympathy.
m in luck, Mr. Sangsby, I am," returns Jo, "and don't want for nothink.
re cumfbler nor you can't think. Mr. Sangsby! I'm wery sorry that I done
I didn't go fur to do it, sir."
stationer softly lays down another half-crown, and asks him what it is
is sorry for having done?
. Sangsby," says Jo, "I went and giv a illness to the lady as wos and yit
n't the t'other lady, and none of 'em never says nothink to me for having
, on accounts of their being ser good and my having been s'unfortnet.
ly come herself and see me yesday, and she ses, 'Ah Jo!' she ses. 'We
t we'd lost you, Jo!' she ses. And she sits down a-smilin so quiet, and
ass a word nor yit a look upon me for having done it, she don't, and I turns
e wall, I doos, Mr. Sangsby. And Mr. Jarnders, I see him a-forced to turn
is own self. And Mr. Woodcot, he come fur to giv me somethink fur to
r, wot he's allus a-doin on day and night, and wen he come a-bendin over
I a-speakin up so bold, I see his tears a-fallin, Mr. Sangsby."
softened stationer deposits another half-crown on the table. Nothing less
repetition of that infallible remedy will relieve his feelings.
ot I was a-thinkin on, Mr. Sangsby," proceeds Jo, "wos, as you wos able
e wery large, p'raps?"
s, Jo, please God," returns the stationer.
common precious large, p'raps?" says Jo, with eagerness.
s, my poor boy."
ughs with pleasure. "Wot I wos a-thinking on then, Mr. Sangsby, was,
hen I was moved on as fur as ever I could go and couldn't be moved no
whether you might be so good p'raps, as to write out, wery large so that any
uld see it anywheres, as that I wos wery truly hearty sorry that I done it and
never went fur to do it; and that though I didn't know nothink at all, I
as Mr. Woodcot once cried over it and wos allus grieved over it, and that
d as he'd be able to forgive me in his mind. If the writin could be made to
very large, he might."
shall say it, Jo. Very large."
ughs again. "Thankee, Mr. Sangsby. It's wery kind of you, sir, and it
me more cumfbler nor I was afore."
meek little stationer, with a broken and unfinished cough, slips down his
half-crown—he has never been so close to a case requiring so many—and is
depart. And Jo and he, upon this little earth, shall meet no more. No

the cart so hard to draw, is near its journey's end, and drags over stony
l. All round the clock it labours up the broken steps, shattered and worn.
any times can the sun rise, and behold it still upon its weary road.
Squod, with his smoky gunpowder visage, at once acts as nurse and works
ourer at his little table in a corner; often looking round, and saying with a
f his green baize cap, and an encouraging elevation of his one eyebrow,
l up, my boy! Hold up!" There, too, is Mr. Jarndyce many a time, and

Allan Woodcourt almost always; both thinking, much, how strange entangled this rough outcast in the web of very different lives. T trooper is a frequent visitor, filling the doorway with his athletic figu his superfluity of life and strength, seeming to shed down temporary Jo, who never fails to speak more robustly in answer to his cheerful v

Jo is in a sleep or in a stupor to-day, and Allan Woodcourt, n stands by him, looking down upon his wasted form. After a while, h himself upon the bedside with his face towards him—just as he sat writer's room—and touches his chest and heart. The cart had very up, but labours on a little more.

The trooper stands in the doorway, still and silent. Phil has stop clinking noise, with his little hammer in his hand. Mr. Woodcourt with that grave professional interest and attention on his face, and, g ficantly at the trooper, signs to Phil to carry his table out. When t mer is next used, there will be a speck of rust upon it.

"Well, Jo! What is the matter? Don't be frightened."

"I thought," says Jo, who has started, and is looking round, was in Tom-all-Alone's agin. Ain't there nobody here but you, M

"Nobody."

"And I ain't took back to Tom-all-Alone's. Am I, sir?"

"No." Jo closes his eyes, muttering, "I'm wery thankful."

After watching him closely a little while, Allan puts his mouth ear, and says to him in a low, distinct voice:

"Jo! Did you ever know a prayer?"

"Never knowd nothink, sir."

"Not so much as one short prayer?"

"No, sir. Nothink at all. Mr. Chadbands he wos a-prayin Sangsby's and I heerd him, but he sounded as if he wos a-speakin' not to me. He prayed a lot, but *I* couldn't make out nothink on times, there was other genlmen come down Tom-all-Alone's a-pr all mostly sed as the t'other wuns prayed wrong, and all mostly soo talking to theirselves, or a-passing blame on the t'others, and not *We* never knowd nothink. *I* never knowd what it wos all about."

It takes him a long time to say this; and few but an experienced listener could hear, or, hearing, understand him. After a short rela or stupor, he makes, of a sudden, a strong effort to get out of bed.

"Stay, Jo! What now?"

"It's time for me to go to that there berryin ground, sir," he retu look.

"Lie down, and tell me. What burying ground, Jo?"

"Where they laid him as wos wery good to me, wery good to m wos. It's time fur me to go down to that there berryin ground sir, put along with him. I wants to go there and be berried. He used me, 'I am as poor as you to-day, Jo,' he ses. I wants to tell him poor as him now, and have come there to be laid along with him."

"By-and-by, Jo. By-and-by."

"Ah! P'raps they wouldn't do it if I wos to go myself. But mise to have me took there, sir, and laid along with him?"

"I will, indeed."

"Thank'ee, sir. Thank'ee, sir. They'll have to get the key of they can take me in, for it's allus locked. And there's a step there, to clean with my broom.—It's turned wery dark, sir. Is there comin?"

ing fast, Jo."
cart is shaken all to pieces, and the rugged road is very near its end.
oor fellow!"
u, sir, in the dark, but I'm a-gropin—a-gropin—let me catch hold of

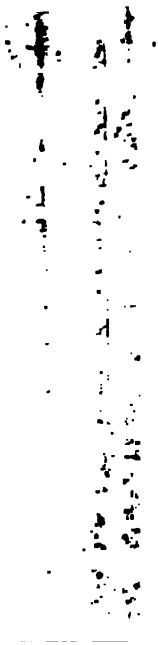
ou say what I say?"
ıythink as you say, sir, for I knows it's good."
THER."
er!"—yes, that's wery good, sir."
ART IN HEAVEN."
:aven—is the light a-comin, sir?"
: at hand. HALLOWED BE THY NAME!"
I be—thy—"
: come upon the dark benighted way. Dead!
Majesty. Dead, my lords and gentlemen. Dead, Right Reverends
Reverends of every order. Dead, men and women, born with
ıpassion in your hearts. And dying thus around us every day.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

CLOSING IN.

Lincolnshire has shut its many eyes again, and the house in town is
Lincolnshire, the Dedlocks of the past doze in their picture-frames,
/ind murmurs through the long drawing-room as if they were breath-
ɣularly. In town, the Dedlocks of the present rattle in their fire-
; through the darkness of the night, and the Dedlock Mercuries, with
r-powder) on their heads, symptomatic of their great humility, loll
wsy mornings in the little windows of the hall. The fashionable
ndous orb, nearly five miles round—is in full swing, and the solar
respectfully at its appointed distances.
throng is thickest, where the lights are brightest, where all the
ıistered to with the greatest delicacy and refinement, Lady Dedlock
ıe shining heights she has scaled and taken, she is never absent.
ɔelief she of old reposed in herself, as one able to reserve whatso-
ld under her mantle of pride, is beaten down; though she has no
t what she is to those around her, she will remain another day; it
nature, when envious eyes are looking on, to yield or to droop.
ıer, that she has lately grown more handsome and more haughty.
ed cousin says of her that she's beauty nough—tsetup Shopof-
rather larming kind—remindingmanfact—inconvenient woman—
ıutofbedandbawthstablishment—Shakspeare.
ghorn says nothing; looks nothing. Now, as heretofore, he is to be
ways of rooms, with his limp white cravat loosely twisted into its
tie, receiving patronage from the Peerage, and making no sign.
ɛ is still the last who might be supposed to have any influence upon
)f all women she is still the last who might be supposed to have any

ıas been much on her mind since their late interview in his turret-
ıey Wold. She is now decided, and prepared to throw it off.
ıg in the great world; afternoon according to the little sun. The



...pleased and surprised.

"See to the door. Is it shut?"

Yes. She goes to it and returns

"I am about to place confiden attachment, if not your judgment. myself to you at least. But I con passes between us."

The timid little beauty promises

"Do you know," Lady Dedlock nearer; "do you know, Rosa, that one?"

"Yes, my Lady. Much kinder. really are."

"You often think you know me a

She says it with a kind of scorn looking dreamily at her.

"Do you think, Rosa, you are an your being young and natural, and pleasure to me to have you near me?

"I don't know, my Lady; I can s wish it was so."

"It is so, little one."

The pretty face is checked in its fl handsome face before it. It looks ti

"And if I were to say to-day, Go! me great pain and disquiet, child, an

"My Lady! Have I offended you

"In nothing. Come here."

Rosa bends down on the footsto motherly touch of the famous Iron-m and gently keeps it there.

"I told you, R...

"Ah, my Lady, I have sometimes thought—forgive my being so free—that *you* are not happy."

"I!"

"Will you be more so, when you have sent me away? Pray, pray, think again. Let me stay a little while!"

"I have said, my child, that what I do, I do for your sake, not my own. It is done. What I am towards you, Rosa, is what I am now—not what I shall be a little while hence. Remember this, and keep my confidence. Do so much for my sake, and thus all ends between us!"

She detaches herself from her simple-hearted companion, and leaves the room. Late in the afternoon, when she next appears upon the staircase, she is in her haughtiest and coldest state. As indifferent as if all passion, feeling, and interest had been worn out in the earlier ages of the world, and had perished from its surface with its other departed monsters.

Mercury has announced Mr. Rouncewell, which is the cause of her appearance. Mr. Rouncewell is not in the library; but she repairs to the library. Sir Leicester is there, and she wishes to speak to him first.

"Sir Leicester, I am desirous—but you are engaged."

O dear no! Not at all. Only Mr. Tulkinghorn.

Always at hand. Haunting every place. No relief or security from him for a moment.

"I beg your pardon, Lady Dedlock. Will you allow me to retire?"

With a look that plainly says, "You know you have the power to remain if you will," she tells him it is not necessary, and moves towards a chair. Mr. Tulkinghorn brings it a little forward for her with his clumsy bow, and retires into a window opposite. Interposed between her and the fading light of day in the now quiet street, his shadow falls upon her, and he darkens all before her. Even so does he darken her life.

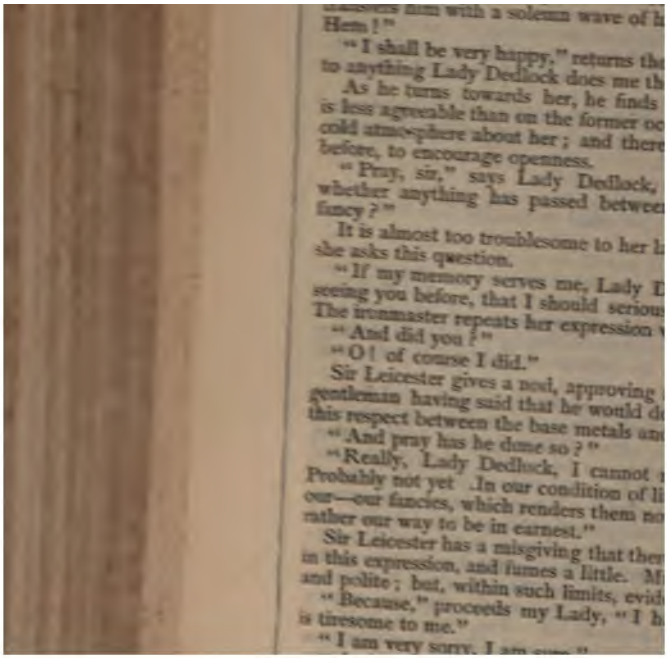
It is a dull street under the best conditions; where the two long rows of houses stare at each other with that severity, that half-a-dozen of its greatest mansions seem to have been slowly stared into stone, rather than originally built in that material. It is a street of such dismal grandeur, so determined not to condescend to liveliness, that the doors and windows hold a gloomy state of their own in black paint and dust, and the echoing mews behind have a dry and massive appearance, as if they were reserved to stable the stone chargers of noble statues. Complicated garnish of iron-work entwines itself over the flights of steps in this awful street; and, from these petrified bowers, extinguishers for obsolete flambeaux gasp at the upstart gas. Here and there a weak little iron hoop, through which bold boys aspire to throw their friends' caps (its only present use), retains its place among the rusty foliage, sacred to the memory of departed oil. Nay, even oil itself, yet lingering at long intervals in a little absurd glass pot, with a knob in the bottom like an oyster, blinks and sulks at newer lights every night, like its high and dry master in the House of Lords.

Therefore there is not much that Lady Dedlock, seated in her chair, could wish to see through the window in which Mr. Tulkinghorn stands. And yet—and yet—she sends a look in that direction, as if it were her heart's desire to have that figure moved out of the way.

Sir Leicester begs his Lady's pardon. She was about to say?

"Only that Mr. Rouncewell is here (he has called by my appointment), and that we had better make an end of the question of that girl. I am tired to death of the matter."

"What can I do—to—assist?" demands Sir Leicester, in some considerable doubt.



great, sir—for a young woman in that station of life. The question then arises, should that young woman be deprived of these many advantages and that good fortune, simply because she has;" Sir Leicester, with an apologetic but dignified inclination of his head towards the ironmaster, winds up his sentence: "has attracted the notice of Mr. Rouncewell's son? Now, has she deserved this punishment? Is this just towards her? Is this our previous understanding?"

"I beg your pardon," interposes Mr. Rouncewell's son's father. "Sir Leicester, will you allow me? I think I may shorten the subject. Pray dismiss that from your consideration. If you remember anything so unimportant—which is not to be expected—you would recollect that my first thought in the affair was directly opposed to her remaining here."

Dismiss the Dedlock patronage from consideration? O! Sir Leicester is bound to believe a pair of ears that have been handed down to him through such a family, or he really might have mistrusted their report of the iron gentleman's observations.

"It is not necessary," observes my Lady, in her coldest manner, before he can do anything but breathe amazedly, "to enter into these matters on either side. The girl is a very good girl; I have nothing whatever to say against her; but she is so far insensible to her many advantages and her good fortune, that she is in love—or supposes she is, poor little fool—and unable to appreciate them."

Sir Leicester begs to observe, that wholly alters the case. He might have been sure that my Lady had the best grounds and reasons in support of her view. He entirely agrees with my Lady. The young woman had better go.

"As Sir Leicester observed, Mr. Rouncewell, on the last occasion, when we were fatigued by this business," Lady Dedlock languidly proceeds, "we cannot make conditions with you. Without conditions, and under present circumstances, the girl is quite misplaced here, and had better go. I have told her so. Would you wish to have her sent back to the village, or would you like to take her with you, or what would you prefer?"

"Lady Dedlock, if I may speak plainly——"

"By all means."

"—I should prefer the course which will the soonest relieve you of the incumbrance, and remove her from her present position."

"And to speak as plainly," she returns, with the same studied carelessness, "so should I. Do I understand that you will take her with you?"

The iron gentleman makes an iron bow.

"Sir Leicester, will you ring?" Mr. Tulkinghorn steps forward from his window and pulls the bell. "I had forgotten you. Thank you." He makes his usual bow, and goes quietly back again. Mercury, swift-responsive, appears, receives instructions whom to produce, skims away, produces the aforesaid, and departs.

Rosa has been crying, and is yet in distress. On her coming in, the ironmaster leaves his chair, takes her arm in his, and remains with her near the door ready to depart.

"You are taken charge of, you see," says my Lady, in her weary manner, "and are going away well protected. I have mentioned that you are a very good girl, and you have nothing to cry for."

"She seems after all," observes Mr. Tulkinghorn, loitering a little forward with his hands behind him, "as if she were crying at going away."

"Why, she is not well-bred, you see," returns Mr. Rouncewell with some quickness in his manner, as if he were glad to have the lawyer to retort upon; "and she is an inexperienced little thing, and knows no better. If she had remained here, sir, she would have improved, no doubt."

"No doubt," is Mr. Tulkinghorn's composed reply.

Rosa sobs out that she is very sorry to leave my Lady, and that she was happy

Dedlock. If I am doubtful of my
first quietly exert my influence to ta
ling you at all. But it appeared to
the thing—that it was respectful to
candid to consult your wishes and c
of acquaintance with the polite worl

Sir Leicester considers himself e
"Mr. Rouncewell," he returns, "d
sary, I hope, on either side."

"I am glad to hear it, Sir Leice
revert to what I said before of my n
the worth it bespeaks on both sides,
my arm, who shows herself so affect
my mother, I dare say, has done son
course Lady Dedlock, by her heartfel
done much more."

If he mean this ironically, it may b
ever, by no deviation from his straight
it he turns towards that part of the din
stands to return his parting salutation,
another flight, and Mr. Rouncewell an

Then lights are brought in, discove
window with his hands behind him, an
her, closing up her view of the night
Mr. Tulkinghorn observing it as she
The power of this woman is astonishi
time." But he can act a part too—his
the door open for this woman, fifty pai
Leicester's pair, should find no flaw in

Lady Dedlock dines alone in her ow
in to the rescue of the T

at do you want, sir?"
, Lady Dedlock," says the lawyer, taking a chair at a little distance from slowly rubbing his rusty legs up and down, up and down, up and down; ather surprised by the course you have taken."
ed?"
decidedly. I was not prepared for it. I consider it a departure from ment and your promise. It puts us in a new position, Lady Dedlock. self under the necessity of saying that I don't approve of it."
ps in his rubbing, and looks at her, with his hands on his knees. Imper- and unchangeable as he is, there is still an indefinable freedom in his which is new, and which does not escape this woman's observation.
not quite understand you."
s you do, I think. I think you do. Come, come, Lady Dedlock, we fence and parry now. You know you like this girl."
, sir?"
you know—and I know—that you have not sent her away for the reasons assigned, but for the purpose of separating her as much as possible from my mentioning it as a matter of business—any reproach and exposure nd over yourself."
, sir?"
, Lady Dedlock," returns the lawyer, crossing his legs, and nursing the t knee. "I object to that. I consider that a dangerous proceeding. to be unnecessary, and calculated to awaken speculation, doubt, rumour, know what, in the house. Besides, it is a violation of our agreement. to be exactly what you were before. Whereas, it must be evident to as it is to me, that you have been this evening very different from what before. Why, bless my soul, Lady Dedlock, transparently so!"
r," she begins, "in my knowledge of my secret—" But he interrupts her.
, Lady Dedlock, this is a matter of business, and in a matter of business d cannot be kept too clear. It is no longer your secret. Excuse me. st the mistake. It is my secret, in trust for Sir Leicester and the family. e your secret, Lady Dedlock, we should not be here, holding this con- "
is very true. If, in my knowledge of *the* secret, I do what I can to innocent girl (especially, remembering your own reference to her when my story to the assembled guests at Chesney Wold) from the taint of my g shame, I act upon a resolution I have taken. Nothing in the world, ie in the world, could shake it, or could move me." This she says with beration and distinctness, and with no more outward passion than himself. im, he methodically discusses his matter of business, as if she were any instrument used in business.
ly? Then you see, Lady Dedlock," he returns, "you are not to be trusted. put the case in a perfectly plain way, and according to the literal fact; being the case, you are not to be trusted."
aps you may remember that I expressed some anxiety on this same point, spoke at night at Chesney Wold?"
" says Mr. Tulkinghorn, coolly getting up and standing on the hearth. I recollect, Lady Dedlock, that you certainly referred to the girl; but before we came to our arrangement, and both the letter and the spirit of gement altogether precluded any action on your part, founded upon my . There can be no doubt about that. As to sparing the girl, of what e or value is she? Spare! Lady Dedlock, here is a family name con- . One might have supposed that the course was straight on—or

clear bell, it strikes three-quarters after seven, and ticks on again. "Why, you are worse than I thought you," says Mr. Tulkinghorn, muttering reproof to his watch. "Two minutes wrong? At this rate you won't last my time." What a watch to return good for evil, if it ticked in answer "Don't go home!"

He passes out into the streets, and walks on, with his hands behind him, under the shadow of the lofty houses, many of whose mysteries, difficulties, mortgages, delicate affairs of all kinds, are treasured up within his old black satin waistcoat. He is in the confidence of the very bricks and mortar. The high chimney-stacks telegraph family secrets to him. Yet there is not a voice in a mile of them to whisper "Don't go home!"

Through the stir and motion of the commoner streets; through the roar and jar of many vehicles, many feet, many voices; with the blazing shop-lights lighting him on, the west wind blowing him on, and the crowd pressing him on; he is pitilessly urged upon his way, and nothing meets him, murmuring "Don't go home!" Arrived at last in his dull room, to light his candles, and look round and up, and see the Roman pointing from the ceiling, there is no new significance in the Roman's hand to-night, or in the flutter of the attendant groups, to give him the late warning, "Don't come here!"

It is a moonlight night; but the moon, being past the full, is only now rising over the great wilderness of London. The stars are shining as they shone above the turret-leads at Chesney Wold. This woman, as he has of late been so accustomed to call her, looks out upon them. Her soul is turbulent within her; she is sick at heart, and restless. The large rooms are too cramped and close. She cannot endure their restraint, and will walk alone in a neighbouring garden.

Too capricious and imperious in all she does, to be the cause of much surprise in those about her as to anything she does, this woman, loosely muffled, goes out into the moonlight. Mercury attends with the key. Having opened the garden-gate, he delivers the key into his Lady's hands at her request, and is bidden to go back. She will walk there some time, to ease her aching head. She may be an hour; she may be more. She needs no further escort. The gate shuts upon its spring with a clash, and he leaves her, passing on into the dark shade of some trees.

A fine night, and a bright large moon, and multitudes of stars. Mr. Tulkinghorn, in repairing to his cellar, and in opening and shutting those resounding doors, has to cross a little prison-like yard. He looks up casually, thinking what a fine night, what a bright large moon, what multitudes of stars! A quiet night, too.

A very quiet night. When the moon shines very brilliantly, a solitude and stillness seem to proceed from her, that influence even crowded places full of life. Not only is it a still night on dusty high roads and on hill-summits, whence a wide expanse of country may be seen in repose, quieter and quieter as it spreads away into a fringe of trees against the sky, with the grey ghost of a bloom upon them; not only is it a still night in gardens and in woods, and on the river where the water-meadows are fresh and green, and the stream sparkles on among pleasant islands, murmuring weirs, and whispering rushes; not only does the stillness attend it as it flows where houses cluster thick, where many bridges are reflected in it, where wharves and shipping make it black and awful, where it winds from these disfigurements through marshes whose grim beacons stand like skeletons washed ashore, where it expands through the bolder region of rising grounds, rich in cornfield wind-mill and steeple, and where it mingles with the ever-heaving sea; not only is it a still night on the deep, and on the shore where the watcher stands to see the ship with her spread wings cross the path of light that appears to be presented to only him; but even on this stranger's wilderness of London there is some rest. *Its steeples and towers*, and its one great dome, grow more ethereal; its

is one dog howling like a demon—
begin to strike. The hum from the
But it is soon over. Before the la
When it has ceased, the fine night, ti
are left at peace again.

Has Mr. Tulkinghorn been disturb
his door is shut. It must be somethi
shell. Nothing is heard of him, notl
might it take to shake that rusty old

For many years, the persistent Ro
meaning, from that ceiling. It is not
to-night. Once pointing, always point
a single idea. There he is, no doubt, i
ingly, all night long. Moonlight, da
still, eagerly pointing, and no one min

But, a little after the coming of the d
either the Roman has some new meanii
most of them goes wild; for, looking
down at what is below it, that person sl
the first one looked, shriek and fly too.

What does it mean? No light is a
people unaccustomed to it, enter, and,
into the bedroom, and lay it down. T
strict search of every corner, careful trac
position of every article of furniture.
voices murmur, "If he could only tell

He is pointing at a table, with a bott
and two candles that were blown out s
pointing at an empty chair, and at a sta
almost covered with a hand. These
excited imagination

nd spiders spare him, with far greater significance than he ever had in Mr. ghorn's time, and with a deadly meaning. For, Mr. Tulkinghorn's time is evermore; and the Roman pointed at the murderous hand uplifted against , and pointed helplessly at him, from night to morning, lying face down- n the floor, shot through the heart.

CHAPTER XLIX.

DUTIFUL FRIENDSHIP.

AT annual occasion has come round in the establishment of Mr. Joseph , otherwise Lignum Vitæ, ex-artilleryman and present bassoon-player. An n of feasting and festival. The celebration of a birthday in the family. not Mr. Bagnet's birthday. Mr. Bagnet merely distinguishes that epoch nusical instrument business, by kissing the children with an extra smack breakfast, smoking an additional pipe after dinner, and wondering towards what his poor old mother is thinking about it,—a subject of infinite specu- and rendered so by his mother having departed this life, twenty years. men rarely revert to their father, but seem, in the bank-books of their rance, to have transferred all the stock of filial affection into their mother's Mr. Bagnet is one of these. Perhaps his exalted appreciation of the f the old girl, causes him usually to make the noun-substantive, Goodness, eminine gender.

not the birthday of one of the three children. Those occasions are kept me marks of distinction, but they rarely overleap the bounds of happy and a pudding. On young Woolwich's last birthday, Mr. Bagnet certainly er observing on his growth and general advancement, proceed, in a moment ound reflection on the changes wrought by time, to examine him in the m; accomplishing with extreme accuracy the questions number one and two, your name? and Who gave you that name? but there failing in the exact t of his memory, and substituting for number three, the question And how like that name? which he propounded with a sense of its importance, in edifying and improving, as to give it quite an orthodox air. This, how- as a speciality on that particular birthday, and not a general solemnity. he old girl's birthday; and that is the greatest holiday and reddest-letter Mr. Bagnet's calendar. The auspicious event is always commemorated ng to certain forms, settled and prescribed by Mr. Bagnet some years since. gnet being deeply convinced that to have a pair of fowls for dinner is to e highest pitch of imperial luxury, invariably goes forth himself very early morning of this day to buy a pair; he is, as invariably, taken in by the and installed in the possession of the oldest inhabitants of any coop in . Returning with these triumphs of toughness tied up in a clean blue and otton handkerchief (essential to the arrangements), he in a casual manner Mrs. Bagnet to declare at breakfast what she would like for dinner. Mrs. by a coincidence never known to fail, replying Fowls, Mr. Bagnet instantly s his bundle from a place of concealment, amidst general amazement and g. He further requires that the old girl shall do nothing all day long, but r very best gown, and be served by himself and the young people. As he nstrious for his cookery, this may be supposed to be a matter of state rather joyment on the old girl's part; but she keeps her state with all imaginable ness.

at half-after one." Says Mi

Mrs. Bagnet, with anguish, bel
and beginning to burn.

"You shall have a dinner, old

Mrs. Bagnet shows her white te
betrays so much uneasiness of spir
to ask her, with his eyes, what is
open, more oblivious of the fowls
a return to consciousness. Fortun
agitation in Mrs. Bagnet's breast,
stopped fowls going round again,
her relief.

"George will look us up," say
moment. How many years, old
noon?"

"Ah, Lignum, Lignum, as man
begin to think. Just about that,
and shaking her head.

"Old girl," says Mr. Bagnet, "
was. If you wasn't younger. Whi

Quebec and Malta here exclaim,
bring mother something, and begin

"Do you know, Lignum," says
cloth, and winking, "salt!" at Mal
away from Quebec with her head;
again."

"George," returns Mr. Bagnet,
rade. In the lurch. Don't be afrai

"No, Lignum. No. I don't sa
could get over this money-trouble of

Mr. Bagnet asks why?

complexion. With a similar perverseness, the potatoes crumble off forks in the process of peeling, upheaving from their centres in every direction, as if they were subject to earthquakes. The legs of the fowls, too, are longer than could be desired, and extremely scaly. Overcoming these disadvantages to the best of his ability, Mr. Bagnet at last dishes, and they sit down at table; Mrs. Bagnet occupying the guest's place at his right hand.

It is well for the old girl that she has but one birthday in a year, for two such indulgences in poultry might be injurious. Every kind of finer tendon and ligament that is in the nature of poultry to possess, is developed in these specimens in the singular form of guitar-strings. Their limbs appear to have struck roots into their breasts and bodies, as aged trees strike roots into the earth. Their legs are so hard, as to encourage the idea that they must have devoted the greater part of their long and arduous lives to pedestrian exercises, and the walking of matches. But Mr. Bagnet, unconscious of these little defects, sets his heart on Mrs. Bagnet eating a most severe quantity of the delicacies before her; and as that good old girl would not cause him a moment's disappointment on any day, least of all on such a day, for any consideration, she imperils her digestion fearfully. How young Woolwich cleans the drum-sticks without being of ostrich descent, his anxious mother is at a loss to understand.

The old girl has another trial to undergo after the conclusion of the repast, in sitting in state to see the room cleared, the hearth swept, and the dinner-service washed up and polished in the back yard. The great delight and energy with which the two young ladies apply themselves to these duties, turning up their skirts in imitation of their mother, and skating in and out on little scaffolds of pattens, inspire the highest hopes for the future, but some anxiety for the present. The same causes lead to confusion of tongues, a clattering of crockery, a rattling of tin mugs, a whisking of brooms, and an expenditure of water, all in excess; while the saturation of the young ladies themselves is almost too moving a spectacle for Mrs. Bagnet to look upon, with the calmness proper to her position. At last the various cleansing processes are triumphantly completed; Quebec and Malta appear in fresh attire, smiling and dry; pipes, tobacco, and something to drink, are placed upon the table; and the old girl enjoys the first peace of mind she ever knows on the day of this delightful entertainment.

When Mr. Bagnet takes his usual seat, the hands of the clock are very near to half-past four; as they mark it accurately, Mr. Bagnet announces,

"George! Military time."

It is George; and he has hearty congratulations for the old girl (whom he kisses on the great occasion), and for the children, and for Mr. Bagnet. "Happy returns to all!" says Mr. George.

"But, George, old man!" cries Mrs. Bagnet, looking at him curiously. "What's come to you?"

"Come to me?"

"Ah! you are so white, George—for you—and look so shocked. Now don't he, Lignum?"

"George," says Mr. Bagnet, "tell the old girl. What's the matter."

"I didn't know I looked white," says the trooper, passing his hand over his brow, "and I didn't know I looked shocked, and I'm sorry I do. But the truth is, that lay who was taken in at my place died yesterday afternoon, and it has rather knocked me over."

"Poor creetur!" says Mrs. Bagnet, with a mother's pity. "Is he gone? Dear, dear!"

"I didn't mean to say anything about it, for it's not birthday talk, but you have got it out of me, you see, before I sit down. I should have roused up in a minute."

"Good!" says Mr. Bagnet. "

"It's so pretty, George," cries J
it out at arm's length, "that it see

"Bad!" says Mr. Bagnet. "N

"But whatever it is, a hundred t
her eyes sparkling with pleasure,
though I have been a crossgraine
are as strong friends, I am sure, in
it on yourself, for good luck, if you

The children close up to see i
Woolwich's head to see it done,
pleasantly childish, that Mrs. Bagn
saying, "O Lignum, Lignum, wh
trooper fails to fasten the brooch. H
"Would any one believe this?" s
round. "I am so out of sorts that

Mrs. Bagnet concludes that for su
fastening the brooch herself in a twi
his usual snug place, and the pipes
you round, George," says she, "just
now and then, and the two together

"You ought to do it of yourself,"
Mrs. Bagnet. I'll tell you how, one w
many for me. Here was this poor la
did, and not be able to help him."

"What do you mean, George? Y
roof."

"I helped him so far, but that's
dying without ever having been taug
from his left. And he was too far g

"Ah, poor creetur!"

ealth; always given by himself, on these occasions, in a speech of ex-rseness. But the young ladies having composed what Mr. Bagnet is bit of calling "the mixtur," and George's pipe being now in a glow, et considers it his duty to proceed to the toast of the evening. He the assembled company in the following terms.

e. Woolwich. Quebec. Malta. This is her birthday. Take a day's And you won't find such another. Here's towards her!"

st having been drunk with enthusiasm, Mrs. Bagnet returns thanks in a ss of corresponding brevity. This model composition is limited to the ls "And wishing yours!" which the old girl follows up with a nod at in succession, and a well-regulated swig of the mixture. This she ws up, on the present occasion, by the wholly unexpected exclamation, man!"

a man, much to the astonishment of the little company, looking in at r-door. He is a sharp-eyed man—a quick keen man—and he takes in 's look at him, all at once, individually and collectively, in a manner that n a remarkable man.

e," says the man, nodding, "how do you find yourself?"

it's Bucket!" cries Mr. George.

says the man, coming in and closing the door. "I was going down here, when I happened to stop and look in at the musical instruments in window—a friend of mine is in want of a second-hand violinceller, of a —and I saw a party enjoying themselves, and I thought it was you in ; I thought I couldn't be mistaken. How goes the world with you, the present moment? Pretty smooth? And with you, ma'am? And governor? And Lord!" says Mr. Bucket, opening his arms, "here's oo! You may do anything with me, if you only show me children. kiss, my pets. No occasion to inquire who *your* father and mother is. such a likeness in my life!"

cket, not unwelcome, has sat himself down next to Mr. George, and ebec and Malta on his knees. "You pretty dears," says Mr. Bucket, another kiss; it's the only thing I'm greedy in. Lord bless you, how u look! And what may be the ages of these two, ma'am? I should put at the figures of about eight and ten."

very near, sir," says Mrs. Bagnet.

erally am near," returns Mr. Bucket, "being so fond of children. A mine has had nineteen of 'em, ma'am, all by one mother, and she's still d rosy as the morning. Not so much so as yourself, but, upon my soul, near you! And what do you call these, my darling?" pursues Mr. inching Malta's cheeks. "These are peaches, these are. Bless your nd what do you think about father? Do you think father could recom-cond-hand violinceller of a good tone for Mr. Bucket's friend, my dear? 's Bucket. Ain't that a funny name?"

landishments have entirely won the family heart. Mrs. Bagnet forgets the extent of filling a pipe and a glass for Mr. Bucket, and waiting upon tably. She would be glad to receive so pleasant a character under any ces, but she tells him that as a friend of George's she is particularly e him this evening, for George has not been in his usual spirits.

n his usual spirits?" exclaims Mr. Bucket. "Why, I never heard of ng! What's the matter, George? You don't intend to tell me you've of spirits. What should you be out of spirits for? You haven't got on your mind, you know."

ng particular," returns the trooper.

g which performance Mr. Bucket, much enlivened, beats time, and never o come in sharp with the burden, "Brit Ish Gra-a-anadeers!" In short, he so much musical taste, that Mr. Bagnet actually takes his pipe from his lips ress his conviction that he is a singer. Mr. Bucket receives the harmonious chment so modestly: confessing how that he did once chaunt a little, for the sion of the feelings of his own bosom, and with no presumptuous idea of aining his friends: that he is asked to sing. Not to be behindhand in the ity of the evening, he complies, and gives them "Believe me if all those ring young charms." This ballad, he informs Mrs. Bagnet he considers to been his most powerful ally in moving the heart of Mrs. Bucket when a n, and inducing her to approach the altar—Mr. Bucket's own words are, to up to the scratch.

s sparkling stranger is such a new and agreeable feature in the evening, that eorge, who testified no great emotions of pleasure on his entrance, begins, te of himself, to be rather proud of him. He is so friendly, is a man of so resources, and so easy to get on with, that it is something to have made him there. Mr. Bagnet becomes, after another pipe, so sensible of the value acquaintance, that he solicits the honour of his company on the old girl's irthday. If anything can more closely cement and consolidate the esteem Mr. Bucket has formed for the family, it is the discovery of the nature of casion. He drinks to Mrs. Bagnet with a warmth approaching to rapture, es himself for that day twelvemonth more than thankfully, makes a memo- m of the day in a large black pocket-book with a girdle to it, and breathes a that Mrs. Bucket and Mrs. Bagnet may before then become, in a manner, . As he says himself, what is public life without private ties? He is in his le way a public man, but it is not in that sphere that he finds happiness. No, t be sought within the confines of domestic bliss.

s natural, under these circumstances, that he, in his turn, should remember end to whom he is indebted for so promising an acquaintance. And he He keeps very close to him. Whatever the subject of the conversation, he a tender eye upon him. He waits to walk home with him. He is interested very boots; and observes even them attentively, as Mr. George sits smoking legged in the chimney-corner.

length, Mr. George rises to depart. At the same moment Mr. Bucket, with cret sympathy of friendship, also rises. He dotes upon the children to the nd remembers the commission he has undertaken for an absent friend.

especting that second-hand violinceller, governor—could you recommend ch a thing?"

cores," says Mr. Bagnet.

am obliged to you," returns Mr. Bucket, squeezing his hand. "You're a in need. A good tone, mind you! My friend is a regular dab at it. Eood, s away at Mo-zart and Handel, and the rest of the big-wigs, like a thorough nan. And you needn't," says Mr. Bucket, in a considerate and private voice, needn't commit yourself to too low a figure, governor. I don't want to pay rge a price for my friend; but I want you to have your proper percentage, e remunerated for your loss of time. That is but fair. Every man must nd ought to it."

Bagnet shakes his head at the old girl, to the effect that they have found a of price.

uppose I was to give you a look in, say at half-arter ten to-morrow morning. ps you could name the figures of a few violincellers of a good tone?" says ucket.

hing easier. Mr. and Mrs. Bagnet both engage to have the requisite

information rea y, and even hint to each other at the practicability of li
small stock coll cted there for approval.

"Thank you," says Mr. Bucket, "thank you. Good night, ma'am.
night, governor. Good night, darlings. I am much obliged to you for en
pleasantest evenings I ever spent in my life."

They, on the contrary, are much obliged to him for the pleasure he ha
them in his company; and so they part with many expressions of good-
both sides. "Now George, old boy," says Mr. Bucket, taking his arm
shop-door, "c ne along!" As they go down the little street, and the l
pause for a ments looking after them, Mrs. Bagnet remarks to the
Lignum that to George like, and seems to b
fond of him."

The neigl nd ill-paved, it is a little inconve
walk there t Mr. George therefore soon prop
walk singly ot make up his mind to relinq
friendly hol te, George. I should wish to s
you first." visits him into a public-house an
parlour, whe s his own back against the door.

"Now, G Duty is duty, and friendship is frie
I never want p it. I have endeavoured to mak
pleasant to-night, and I [illegible] whether I have done it or not. Yo
consider yourself in custody, George."

"Custody? What for?" returns the trooper, thunderstruck.

"Now, George," says Mr. Bucket, urging a sensible view of the case up with his fat forefinger, "duty, as you know very well, is one thing, and sation is another. It's my duty to inform you that any observations you ma will be liable to be used against you. Therefore, George, be careful w say. You don't happen to have heard of a murder?"

"Murder!"

"Now, George," says Mr. Bucket, keeping his forefinger in an impressive action, "bear in mind what I've said to you. I ask you nothing. You've low spirits this afternoon. I say, you don't happen to have heard of a mu

"No. Where has there been a murder?"

"Now, George," says Mr. Bucket, "don't you go and commit yourself. going to tell you what I want you for. There has been a murder in Lince Fields—gentleman of the name of Tulkinghorn. He was shot last night. you for that."

The trooper sinks upon a seat behind him, and great drops start out u forehead, and a deadly pallor overspreads his face.

"Bucket! It's not possible that Mr. Tulkinghorn has been killed, and t suspect *me*?"

"George," returns Mr. Bucket, keeping his forefinger going, "it is c possible, because it's the case. This deed was done last night at ten Now, you know where you were last night at ten o'clock, and you'll be prove it, no doubt."

"Last night! Last night?" repeats the trooper, thoughtfully. Then it upon him. "Why, great Heaven, I was there, last night!"

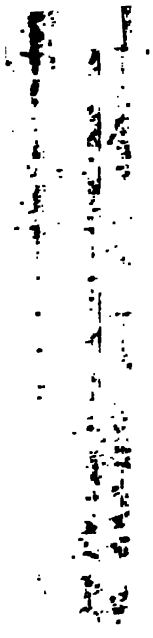
"So I have understood, George," returns Mr. Bucket, with great delib "So I have understood. Likewise you've been very often there. You' seen hanging about the place, and you've been heard more than once in a with him, and it's possible—I don't say it's certainly so, mind you, but it's p —that he may have been heard to call you a threatening, murdering, dar *fellow*."

trooper gasps as if he would admit it all, if he could speak.
ow, George," continues Mr. Bucket, putting his hat upon the table, with an business rather in the upholstery way than otherwise, "My wish is, as it has ll the evening, to make things pleasant. I tell you plainly there's a reward f a hundred guineas, offered by Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet. You and ve always been pleasant together; but I have got a duty to discharge; and hundred guineas is to be made, it may as well be made by me as any other On all of which accounts, I should hope it was clear to you that I must ou, and that I'm damned if I don't have you. Am I to call in any assis- or is the trick done?"
George has recovered himself, and stands up like a soldier. "Come," he "I am ready."
eorge," continues Mr. Bucket, "wait a bit!" With his upholsterer manner, e trooper were a window to be fitted up, he takes from his pocket a pair of affs. "This is a serious charge, George, and such is my duty."
trooper flushes angrily, and hesitates a moment; but holds out his two clasped together, and says, "There! Put them on!"
Bucket adjusts them in a moment. "How do you find them? Are they rtable? If not, say so, for I wish to make things as pleasant as is consistent ay duty, and I've got another pair in my pocket." This remark he offers most respectable tradesman, anxious to execute an order neatly, and to the t satisfaction of his customer. "They'll do as they are? Very well! Now, e, George;" he takes a cloak from a corner, and begins adjusting it about oper's neck: "I was mindful of your feelings when I come out, and brought purpose. There! Who's the wiser?"
aly I," returns the trooper; "but, as I know it, do me one more good turn, ill my hat over my eyes."
eally, though! Do you mean it? Ain't it a pity? It looks so."
can't look chance men in the face with these things on," Mr. George hur- replies. "Do, for God's sake, pull my hat forward."
trongly entreated, Mr. Bucket complies, puts his own hat on, and conducts ze into the streets; the trooper marching on as steadily as usual, though is head less erect; and Mr. Bucket steering him with his elbow over the gs and up the turnings.

CHAPTER L.

ESTHER'S NARRATIVE.

pened that when I came home from Deal, I found a note from Caddy Jellyby always continued to call her), informing me that her health, which had been ne time very delicate, was worse, and that she would be more glad than she tell me if I would go to see her. It was a note of a few lines, written from uch on which she lay, and enclosed to me in another from her husband, in he seconded her entreaty with much solicitude. Caddy was now the mother, the godmother, of such a poor little baby—such a tiny old-faced mite, with ntenance that seemed to be scarcely anything but cap-border, and a little lean, ingered hand, always clenched under its chin. It would lie in this attitude y, with its bright specks of eyes open, wondering (as I used to imagine) how e to be so small and weak. Whenever it was moved it cried; but at all



strengthening in her mind ever sinc
with her head in my lap. She aln
did her good whenever I was near
the affectionate girl's that I am alr
all the force of a fact when she wa
my guardian's consent, post-haste;
there never was anything like it.

Next day I went again to sit with
easy journey; for I had only to ris
accounts, and attend to housekeepi
had made these three visits, my gua

"Now, little woman, little woma
wear away a stone, and constant coa
go to London for a while, and take

"Not for me, dear Guardian," said
true. I was only too happy to be in

"For me then," returned my guar
somebody's birthday to-morrow, I th

"Truly I think it is," said I, kis
to-morrow.

"Well," observed my guardian, h
occasion, and will give my fair cousin
tion of her independence, and will m
of us. So to London we will go. I
how have you left Caddy?"

"Very unwell, Gardian. I fear it
health and strength.

"What do you call some time, no

"Some weeks, I am afraid."

"Ah!" He began to walk about
showing that he had been thinking

So far from that, I had no doubt of her being prepared to have a great reliance on him, and to like him very much. I said that he was no stranger to her personally, for she had seen him often in his kind attendance on Miss Flite.

"Very good," said my guardian. "He has been here to-day, my dear, and I will see him about it to-morrow."

I felt, in this short conversation—though I did not know how, for she was quiet, and we interchanged no look—that my dear girl well remembered how merrily she had clasped me round the waist, when no other hands than Caddy's had brought me the little parting token. This caused me to feel that I ought to tell her, and Caddy too, that I was going to be the mistress of Bleak House; and that if I avoided that disclosure any longer, I might become less worthy in my own eyes of its master's love. Therefore, when we went up-stairs, and had waited listening until the clock struck twelve, in order that only I might be the first to wish my darling all good wishes on her birthday, and to take her to my heart, I set before her, just as I had set before myself, the goodness and honour of her cousin John, and the happy life that was in store for me. If ever my darling were fonder of me at one time than another in all our intercourse, she was surely fondest of me that night. And I was so rejoiced to know it, and so comforted by the sense of having done right, in casting this last idle reservation away, that I was ten times happier than I had been before. I had scarcely thought it a reservation a few hours ago; but now that it was gone, I felt as if I understood its nature better.

Next day we went to London. We found our old lodging vacant, and in half an hour were quietly established there, as if we had never gone away. Mr. Woodcourt dined with us, to celebrate my darling's birthday; and we were as pleasant as we could be with the great blank among us that Richard's absence naturally made on such an occasion. After that day I was for some weeks—eight or nine as I remember—very much with Caddy; and thus it fell out that I saw less of Ada at this time than any other since we had first come together, except the time of my own illness. She often came to Caddy's; but our function there was to amuse and cheer her, and we did not talk in our usual confidential manner. Whenever I went home at night, we were together; but Caddy's rest was broken by pain, and I often remained to nurse her.

With her husband and her poor little mite of a baby to love, and their home to strive for, what a good creature Caddy was! So self-denying, so uncomplaining, so anxious to get well on their account, so afraid of giving trouble, and so thoughtful of the unassisted labours of her husband and the comforts of old Mr. Turveydrop; I had never known the best of her until now. And it seemed so curious that her pale face and helpless figure should be lying there day after day, where dancing was the business of life; where the kit and the apprentices began early every morning in the ball-room, and where the untidy little boy waltzed by himself in the kitchen all the afternoon.

At Caddy's request, I took the supreme direction of her apartment, trimmed it up, and pushed her, couch and all, into a lighter and more airy and more cheerful corner than she had yet occupied; then, every day, when we were in our neatest array, I used to lay my small small namesake in her arms, and sit down to chat or work, or read to her. It was at one of the first of these quiet times that I told Caddy about Bleak House.

We had other visitors besides Ada. First of all, we had Prince, who in his hurried intervals of teaching used to come softly in and sit softly down, with a face of loving anxiety for Caddy and the very little child. Whatever Caddy's condition really was, she never failed to declare to Prince that she was all but well—which I, Heaven forgive me, never failed to confirm. This would put Prince in such good

Then there was old Mr. Turvey
night to morning the subject of i
was nearly stifled lest the noise
wanted stirring in the night, it v
broken. If Caddy required any l
carefully discussed whether he was
sideration, he would come into the
a condescension, and a patronage,
of his high-shouldered presence, f
not known better, to have been the

"My Caroline," he would say,
bending over her. "Tell me that

"O much better, thank you, Mr

"Delighted! Enchanted! And
prostrated by fatigue?" Here he
to me; though I am happy to say
since I had been so altered.

"Not at all," I would assure hir

"Charming! We must take ca
must spare nothing that will restor
line;" he would turn to his daughte
"want for nothing, my love. Frar
thing this house contains, everyth
dear. Do not," he would sometim
my simple requirements to be consi
your own, my Caroline. Your nee

He had established such a lon
son's inheritance from his mother
her husband to be melted to tears b

"Nay, my dears," he would ren
about his fat neck as he said it. I

rated to walk hand in hand with the professor of Deportment, he had to be newly dressed, at the expense of Caddy and her husband, from top to toe.

Last of our visitors, there was Mr. Jellyby. Really when he used to come in of an evening, and ask Caddy in his meek voice how she was, and then sit down with his head against the wall, and make no attempt to say anything more, I liked him very much. If he found me bustling about, doing any little thing, he sometimes half took his coat off, as if with an intention of helping by a great exertion; but he never got any further. His sole occupation was to sit with his head against the wall, looking hard at the thoughtful baby; and I could not quite divest my mind of a fancy that they understood one another.

I have not counted Mr. Woodcourt among our visitors, because he was now Caddy's regular attendant. She soon began to improve under his care; but he was so gentle, so skilful, so unwearying in the pains he took, that it is not to be wondered at, I am sure. I saw a good deal of Mr. Woodcourt during this time, though not so much as might be supposed; for, knowing Caddy to be safe in his hands, I often slipped home at about the hours when he was expected. We frequently met, notwithstanding. I was quite reconciled to myself now; but I still felt glad to think that he was sorry for me, and he still *was* sorry for me I believed. He helped Mr. Badger in his professional engagements, which were numerous; and had as yet no settled projects for the future.

It was when Caddy began to recover, that I began to notice a change in my dear girl. I cannot say how it first presented itself to me; because I observed it in many slight particulars, which were nothing in themselves, and only became something when they were pieced together. But I made it out, by putting them together, that Ada was not so frankly cheerful with me as she used to be. Her tenderness for me was as loving and true as ever; I did not for a moment doubt that; but there was a quiet sorrow about her which she did not confide to me, and in which I traced some hidden regret.

Now I could not understand this; and I was so anxious for the happiness of my own pet, that it caused me some uneasiness, and set me thinking often. At length, feeling sure that Ada suppressed this something from me, lest it should make me unhappy too, it came into my head that she was a little grieved—for me—by what I had told her about Bleak House.

How I persuaded myself that this was likely, I don't know. I had no idea that there was any selfish reference in my doing so. I was not grieved for myself: I was quite contented and quite happy. Still, that Ada might be thinking—for me, though I had abandoned all such thoughts—of what once was, but was now all changed, seemed so easy to believe, that I believed it.

What could I do to reassure my darling (I considered then) and show her that I had no such feelings? Well! I could only be as brisk and busy as possible, and that, I had tried to be all along. However, as Caddy's illness had certainly interested, more or less, with my home duties—though I had always been there in the morning to make my guardian's breakfast, and he had a hundred times laughed, and said there must be two little women, for his little woman was never missing—I resolved to be doubly diligent and gay. So I went about the house, humming all the tunes I knew; and I sat working and working in a desperate manner, and I talked and talked, morning, noon, and night.

And still there was the same shade between me and my darling.

"So, Dame Trot," observed my guardian, shutting up his book, one night when we were all three together; "so Woodcourt has restored Caddy Jellyby to the full enjoyment of life again?"

"Yes," I said; "and to be repaid by such gratitude as hers, is to be made rich, Guardian."

That was quite another thing,
"To be sure," said my guardia
court, a high esteem for him; an
plans. It is difficult to offer aid
pride which he possesses. And ye
how. He seems half inclined for
such a man away."
"It might open a new world to
"So it might, little woman," n
much of the old world. Do you k
particular disappointment, or misf
anything of that sort?"
I shook my head.
"Humph," said my guardian.
As there was a little pause here,
had better be filled up, I hummed
my guardian.
"And do you think Mr. Woodco
when I had hummed it quietly all t
"I don't quite know what to thi
present that he will give a long trial
"I am sure he will take the best
goes," said I; "and though they a
them, Guardian, at least."
"Never, little woman," he replie
I was sitting in my usual place,
That had not been my usual place
to Ada, who was sitting opposite;
were filled with tears, and that tears
only to be placid and merry, once fo
heart at rest

dames? You don't forget how happily and peacefully my life is all marked out for me, and by whom? I am certain that you don't forget by what a noble character, Ada. That can never be."

"No, never, Esther."

"Why then, my dear," said I, "there can be nothing amiss—and why should you not speak to us?"

"Nothing amiss, Esther?" returned Ada. "O when I think of all these years, and of his fatherly care and kindness, and of the old relations among us, and of you, what shall I do, what shall I do!"

I looked at my child in some wonder, but I thought it better not to answer, otherwise than by cheering her; and so I turned off into many little recollections of our life together, and prevented her from saying more. When she lay down to sleep, and not before, I returned to my guardian to say good night; and then I came back to Ada, and sat near her for a little while.

She was asleep, and I thought as I looked at her that she was a little changed. I had thought so, more than once lately. I could not decide, even looking at her while she was unconscious, how she was changed; but something in the familiar beauty of her face looked different to me. My guardian's old hopes of her and Richard arose sorrowfully in my mind, and I said to myself, "she has been anxious about him," and I wondered how that love would end.

When I had come home from Caddy's while she was ill, I had often found Ada at work, and she had always put her work away, and I had never known what it was. Some of it now lay in a drawer near her, which was not quite closed. I did not open the drawer; but I still rather wondered what the work could be, for it was evidently nothing for herself.

And I noticed as I kissed my dear, that she lay with one hand under her pillow so that it was hidden.

How much less amiable I must have been than they thought me, how much less amiable than I thought myself, to be so pre-occupied with my own cheerfulness and contentment, as to think that it only rested with me to put my dear girl right, and set her mind at peace!

But I lay down, self-deceived, in that belief. And I awoke in it next day, to find that there was still the same shade between me and my darling.

CHAPTER LI.

ENLIGHTENED.

When Mr. Woodcourt arrived in London, he went, that very same day, to Mr. Vholes's in Symond's Inn. For he never once, from the moment when I entreated him to be a friend to Richard, neglected or forgot his promise. He had told me that he accepted the charge as a sacred trust, and he was ever true to it in that spirit.

He found Mr. Vholes in his office, and informed Mr. Vholes of his agreement with Richard, that he should call there to learn his address.

"Just so, sir," said Mr. Vholes. "Mr. C's address is not a hundred miles from here, sir, Mr. C's address is not a hundred miles from here. Would you take a seat, sir?"

Mr. Woodcourt thanked Mr. Vholes, but he had no business with him beyond what he had mentioned.

"Just so, sir. I believe, sir," said Mr. Vholes, still quietly insisting on the seat.

by not giving the address, "that you have influence with Mr. C. Indeed I am aware that you have."

"I was not aware of it myself," returned Mr. Woodcourt; "but I suppose you know best."

"Sir," rejoined Mr. Vholes, self-contained, as usual, voice and all, "it is a part of my professional duty to know best. It is a part of my professional duty to study and to understand a gentleman who confides his interests to me. In my professional duty I shall not be wanting, sir, if I know it. I may, with the best intentions, be wanting in it without knowing it; but not if I know it, sir."

Mr. Woodcourt again mentioned the address.

"Give me leave, si[illegible] Bear with me for a moment. Sir, Mr. C is playing for [illegible]d cannot play without—need I say what?"

"Money, I presume."

"Sir," said Mr. V[illegible]ith you (honesty being my golden rule, whether I gain [illegible]that I generally lose), money is the word. Now, sir, upo[illegible]s game I express to you no opinion, *no* opinion. It migh[illegible]Mr. C, after playing so long and so high, to leave off; it[illegible] I say nothing. No, sir," said Mr. Vholes, bringing his [illegible]s desk, in a positive manner, "no-thing."

"You seem to forget," returned Mr. Woodcourt, "that I ask you to say nothing, and have no interest in anything you say."

"Pardon me, sir!" retorted Mr. Vholes, "you do yourself an injustice. No, sir! Pardon me! You shall not—shall not in my office, if I know it—do yourself an injustice. You are interested in anything, and in everything, that relates to your friend. I know human nature much better, sir, than to admit for an instant that a gentleman of your appearance is not interested in whatever concerns his friend."

"Well," replied Mr. Woodcourt, "that may be. I am particularly interested in his address."

("The number, sir,") said Mr. Vholes, parenthetically, ("I believe I have already mentioned.) If Mr. C is to continue to play for this considerable stake, sir, he must have funds. Understand me! There are funds in hand at present. I ask for nothing; there are funds in hand. But, for the onward play, more funds must be provided; unless Mr. C is to throw away what he has already ventured—which is wholly and solely a point for his consideration. This, sir, I take the opportunity of stating openly to you, as the friend of Mr. C. Without funds, I shall always be happy to appear and act for Mr. C, to the extent of all such costs as are safe to be allowed out of the estate: not beyond that. I could not go beyond that, sir, without wronging some one. I must either wrong my three dear girls; or my venerable father, who is entirely dependent on me—in the Vale of Taunton; or some one. Whereas, sir, my resolution is (call it weakness or folly if you please) to wrong no one."

Mr. Woodcourt rather sternly rejoined that he was glad to hear it.

"I wish, sir," said Mr. Vholes, "to leave a good name behind me. Therefore, I take every opportunity of openly stating to a friend of Mr. C, how Mr. C is situated. As to myself, sir, the labourer is worthy of his hire. If I undertake to put my shoulder to the wheel, I do it, and I earn what I get. I am here for that purpose. My name is painted on the door outside, with that object."

"And Mr. Carstone's address, Mr. Vholes?"

"Sir," returned Mr. Vholes, "as I believe I have already mentioned, it is next door. On the second story you will find Mr. C's apartments. Mr. C desires

to be near his professional adviser; and I am far from objecting, for I court inquiry."

Upon this, Mr. Woodcourt wished Mr. Vholes good day, and went in search of Richard, the change in whose appearance he began to understand now but too well.

He found him in a dull room, fadedly furnished; much as I had found him in his barrack-room but a little while before, except that he was not writing, but was sitting with a book before him, from which his eyes and thoughts were far astray. As the door chanced to be standing open, Mr. Woodcourt was in his presence for some moments without being perceived; and he told me that he never could forget the haggardness of his face, and the dejection of his manner, before he was aroused from his dream.

"Woodcourt, my dear fellow!" cried Richard, starting up with extended hands, "you come upon my vision like a ghost."

"A friendly one," he replied, "and only waiting, as they say ghosts do, to be addressed. How does the mortal world go?" They were seated now, near together.

"Badly enough, and slowly enough," said Richard; "speaking at least for my part of it."

"What part is that?"

"The Chancery part."

"I never heard," returned Mr. Woodcourt, shaking his head, "of its going well yet."

"Nor I," said Richard, moodily. "Who ever did?"

He brightened again in a moment, and said, with his natural openness:

"Woodcourt, I should be sorry to be misunderstood by you, even if I gained by it in your estimation. You must know that I have done no good this long time. I have not intended to do much harm, but I seem to have been capable of nothing else. It may be that I should have done better by keeping out of the net into which my destiny has worked me; but I think not, though I dare say you will soon hear, if you have not already heard, a very different opinion. To make short of a long story, I am afraid I have wanted an object; but I have an object now—or it has me—and it is too late to discuss it. Take me as I am, and make the best of me."

"A bargain," said Mr. Woodcourt. "Do as much by me in return."

"Oh! You," returned Richard, "you can pursue your art for its own sake; and can put your hand upon the plough, and never turn; and can strike a purpose out of anything. You, and I, are very different creatures."

He spoke regretfully, and lapsed for a moment into his weary condition.

"Well, well!" he cried, shaking it off, "everything has an end. We shall see! So you will take me as I am, and make the best of me?"

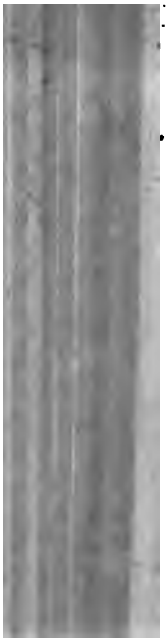
"Aye! indeed I will." They shook hands upon it laughingly, but in deep earnestness. I can answer, for one of them, with my heart of hearts.

"You come as a godsend," said Richard, "for I have seen nobody here yet but Vholes. Woodcourt, there is one subject I should like to mention, for once and for all, in the beginning of our treaty. You can hardly make the best of me if I don't. You know, I dare say, that I have an attachment to my cousin Ada?"

Mr. Woodcourt replied that I had hinted as much to him.

"Now pray," returned Richard, "don't think me a heap of selfishness. Don't suppose that I am splitting my head and half breaking my heart over this miserable Chancery suit, for my own rights and interests alone. Ada's are bound up with mine; they can't be separated; Vholes works for both of us. Do think of that!"

He was so very solicitous on this head, that Mr. Woodcourt gave him the strongest assurances that he did him no injustice.



took place; and I now return t
shade was still between me and

I proposed to Ada, that mor
little surprised me to find that s
had expected.

"My dear," said I, "you hav
been so much away?"

"No, Esther."

"Not heard of him, perhaps?

"Yes, I have heard of him,"

Such tears in her eyes, and suc
out. Should I go to Richard's l
not go by myself. Would she g
with me. Should we go now?
stand my darling, with the tears

We were soon equipped, and v
rain fell at intervals. It was one
heavy and harsh. The houses
swooped at us, nothing made a
aspect. I fancied my beautiful g
thought there were more funerals
ever seen before.

We had first to find out Symo
when Ada said she thought it w
be far out, my love, if we go in t
went; and there, sure enough, w

We had next to find out the
recollected, "for Mr. Vholes's off
that was Mr. Vholes's office in th

Then came the question, which
and my darling was going for the

when anybody else with half his work to do would be thinking about not being able to come. And he is so cheery, so fresh, so sensible, so earnest, so—everything that I am not, that the place brightens whenever he comes, and darkens whenever he goes again."

"God bless him," I thought, "for his truth to me!"

"He is not so sanguine, Ada," continued Richard, casting his dejected look over the bundles of papers, "as Vholes and I are usually; but he is only an outsider, and is not in the mysteries. We have gone into them, and he has not. He can't be expected to know much of such a labyrinth."

As his look wandered over the papers again, and he passed his two hands over his head, I noticed how sunken and how large his eyes appeared, how dry his lips were, and how his finger-nails were all bitten away.

"Is this a healthy place to live in, Richard, do you think?" said I.

"Why, my dear Minerva," answered Richard, with his old gay laugh, "it is neither a rural nor a cheerful place: and when the sun shines here, you may lay a pretty heavy wager that it is shining brightly in an open spot. But it's well enough for the time. It's near the offices, and near Vholes."

"Perhaps," I hinted, "a change from both——"

"—Might do me good?" said Richard, forcing a laugh as he finished the sentence. "I shouldn't wonder! But it can only come in one way now—in one of two ways, I should rather say. Either the suit must be ended, Esther, or the suitor. But it shall be the suit, my dear girl, the suit, my dear girl!"

These latter words were addressed to Ada, who was sitting nearest to him. Her face being turned away from me and towards him, I could not see it.

"We are doing very well," pursued Richard. "Vholes will tell you so. We are really spinning along. Ask Vholes. We are giving them no rest. Vholes knows all their windings and turnings, and we are upon them everywhere. We have astonished them already. We shall rouse up that nest of sleepers, mark my words!"

His hopefulness had long been more painful to me than his despondency; it was so unlike hopefulness, had something so fierce in its determination to be it, was so hungry and eager, and yet so conscious of being forced and unsustainable, that it had long touched me to the heart. But the commentary upon it now indelibly written in his handsome face, made it far more distressing than it used to be. I say indelibly; for I felt persuaded that if the fatal cause could have been for ever terminated, according to his brightest visions, in that same hour, the traces of the premature anxiety, self-reproach, and disappointment it had occasioned him, would have remained upon his features to the hour of his death.

"The sight of our dear little woman," said Richard: Ada still remaining silent and quiet: "is so natural to me, and her compassionate face is so like the face of old days——"

Ah! No, no. I smiled and shook my head.

"—So exactly like the face of old days," said Richard in his cordial voice, and taking my hand with the brotherly regard which nothing ever changed, "that I can't make pretences with her. I fluctuate a little; that's the truth. Sometimes I hope, my dear, and sometimes I—don't quite despair, but nearly. I get," said Richard, relinquishing my hand gently, and walking across the room, "so tired!"

He took a few turns up and down, and sunk upon the sofa. "I get," he repeated gloomily, "so tired. It is such weary weary work!"

He was leaning on his arm, saying these words in a meditative voice, and looking at the ground, when my darling rose, put off her bonnet, kneeled down beside him with her golden hair falling like sunlight on his head, clasped her two arms round his neck, and turned her face to me. O, what a loving and devoted face I saw!

"Esther, dear," she said very quietly, "I am not going home again."

A light shone in upon me all at once.

"Never any more. I am going to stay with my dear husband. We hav married above two months. Go home without me, my own Esther; I shal go home any more!" With those words my darling drew his head down breast, and held it there. And if ever in my life I saw a love that nothi death could change, I saw it then before me.

"Speak to Esther, my dearest," said Richard, breaking the silence pre "Tell her how it was."

I met her before she could come to me, and folded her in my arms. We of us spoke; bu y own, I wanted to hear nothing. pet," said I. " girl!" I pitied her so much. very fond of R at I had upon me was to pity much.

"Esther, wi y cousin John forgive me?"

"My dear,' moment, is to do him a great And as to me d I to forgive!

I dried my s at beside her on the sofa, and R sat on my othe minded of that so different night they had first ice, and had gone on in their ow happy way, they told me ow it was.

"All I had, was Richard's, Ada said; "and Richard would not t Esther, and what could I do but be his wife when I loved him dearly!"

"And you were so fully and so kindly occupied, excellent Dame Durden, Richard, "that how could we speak to you at such a time! And besides, not a long-considered step. We went out one morning and were married."

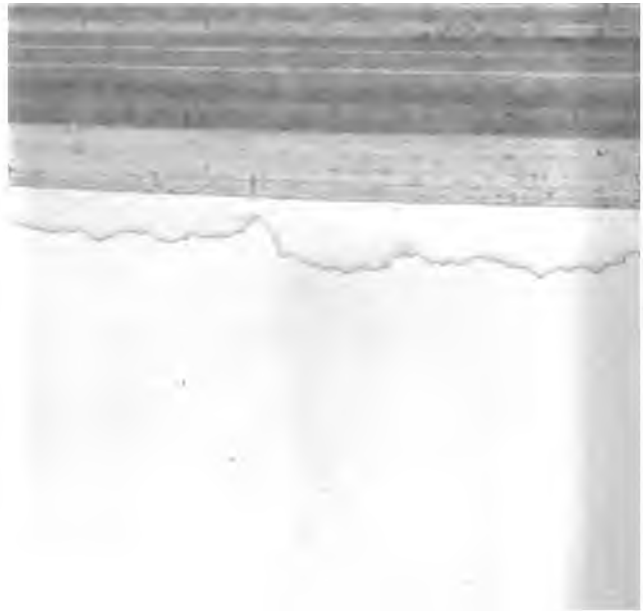
"And when it was done, Esther," said my darling, "I was always th how to tell you, and what to do for the best. And sometimes I thought you to know it directly; and sometimes I thought you ought not to know i keep it from my cousin John; and I could not tell what to do, and I frette much."

How selfish I must have been, not to have thought of this before! I don't what I said now. I was so sorry, and yet I was so fond of them, and so gla they were fond of me; I pitied them so much, and yet I felt a kind of pr their loving one another. I never had experienced such painful and pleas emotion at one time; and in my own heart I did not know which predomi But I was not there to darken their way; I did not do that.

When I was less foolish and more composed, my darling took her weddin from her bosom, and kissed it, and put it on. Then I remembered last nigh told Richard that ever since her marriage she had worn it at night when the no one to see. Then Ada blushingly asked me how did I know that, my Then I told Ada how I had seen her hand concealed under her pillow, an little thought why, my dear. Then they began telling me how it was, al again; and I began to be sorry and glad again, and foolish again, and to hi plain old face as much as I could, lest I should put them out of heart.

Thus the time went on, until it became necessary for me to think of retu When that time arrived it was the worst of all, for then my darling comp broke down. She clung round my neck, calling me by every dear name she think of, and saying what should she do without me! Nor was Richard better; and as for me, I should have been the worst of the three, if I h severely said to myself, "Now, Esther, if you do, I'll never speak to you aga

"Why, I declare," said I, "I never saw such a wife. I don't think she *her husband* at all. Here, Richard, take my child, for goodness' sake."



d her tight all the while, and could have wept over her I don't know how ng.

"I give this dear young couple notice," said I, "that I am only going away to me back to-morrow; and that I shall be always coming backwards and forwards, til Symond's Inn is tired of the sight of me. So I shall not say good bye, chard. For what would be the use of that, you know, when I am coming back soon!"

I had given my darling to him now, and I meant to go; but I lingered for one re look of the precious face, which it seemed to rive my heart to turn from.

So I said (in a merry bustling manner) that unless they gave me some encouragement to come back, I was not sure that I could take that liberty; upon which my ar girl looked up, faintly smiling through her tears, and I folded her lovely face tween my hands, and gave it one last kiss, and laughed, and ran away.

And when I got down-stairs, O how I cried! It almost seemed to me that I d lost my Ada for ever. I was so lonely, and so blank without her, and it was desolate to be going home with no hope of seeing her there, that I could get no mfort for a little while, as I walked up and down in a dim corner, sobbing and ing.

I came to myself by-and-by, after a little scolding, and took a coach home. The or boy whom I had found at St. Albans had reappeared a short time before, and as lying at the point of death; indeed, was then dead, though I did not know it. y guardian had gone out to inquire about him, and did not return to dinner. ing quite alone, I cried a little again; though, on the whole, I don't think I haved so very, very ill.

It was only natural that I should not be quite accustomed to the loss of my rling yet. Three or four hours were not a long time, after years. But my mind elt so much upon the uncongenial scene in which I had left her, and I pictured it such an overshadowed stony-hearted one, and I so longed to be near her, and king some sort of care of her, that I determined to go back in the evening, only look up at her windows.

It was foolish, I dare say; but it did not then seem at all so to me, and it does t seem quite so even now. I took Charley into my confidence, and we went at dusk. It was dark when we came to the new strange home of my dear l, and there was a light behind the yellow blinds. We walked past cautiously ree or four times, looking up; and narrowly missed encountering Mr. Vholes, who me out of his office while we were there, and turned his head to look up too, fore going home. The sight of his lank black figure, and the lonesome air of at nook in the dark, were favourable to the state of my mind. I thought of the outh and love and beauty of my dear girl, shut up in such an ill-assorted refuge, most as if it were a cruel place.

It was very solitary and very dull, and I did not doubt that I might safely steal p-stairs. I left Charley below, and went up with a light foot, not distressed by my glare from the feeble oil lanterns on the way. I listened for a few moments; nd in the musty rotting silence of the house, believed that I could hear the murmur their young voices. I put my lips to the hearse-like panel of the door, as a kiss r my dear, and came quietly down again, thinking that one of these days I would rmless to the visit.

And it really did me good; for, though nobody but Charley and I knew anything about it, I somehow felt as if it had diminished the separation between Ada nd me, and had brought us together again for those moments. I went back, not uite accustomed yet to the change, but all the better for that hovering about my arling.

My guardian had come home, and was standing thoughtfully by the dark

gun! Poor Rick! Poor Ada
Neither of us spoke after tha
Bleak House is thinning fast."

"But its mistress remains, C
ventured because of the sorro
all she can to make it happy,"

"She will succeed, my love

The letter had made no diff
had come to be mine; it made
upon me, laid his hand on my
succeed, my dear. Neverthele

I was sorry presently that th
pointed. I feared I might not
letter and the answer.

BUT one other day had interve
to breakfast, Mr. Woodcourt
terrible murder had been commi
and was in custody. When he
Leicester Dedlock for the murd
nation understand why; but a f
person was Sir Leicester's law
rushed into my remembrance.

This unforeseen and violent
distrusted

was; and found that they were earnestly speaking of the suspected man, and recalling every favourable impression we had formed of him, out of the good we had known of him; my interest and my fears were so strongly aroused in his behalf that I was quite set up again.

"Guardian, you don't think it possible that he is justly accused?"

"My dear, I *can't* think so. This man whom we have seen so open-hearted and compassionate; who, with the might of a giant, has the gentleness of a child; who looks as brave a fellow as ever lived, and is so simple and quiet with it; this man justly accused of such a crime? I can't believe it. It's not that I don't or I won't. I can't!"

"And I can't," said Mr. Woodcourt. "Still, whatever we believe or know of him, we had better not forget that some appearances are against him. He bore an animosity towards the deceased gentleman. He has openly mentioned it in many places. He is said to have expressed himself violently towards him, and he certainly did about him, to my knowledge. He admits that he was alone, on the scene of the murder, within a few minutes of its commission. I sincerely believe him to be as innocent of any participation in it, as I am; but these are all reasons for suspicion falling upon him."

"True," said my guardian; and he added, turning to me, "it would be doing him a very bad service, my dear, to shut our eyes to the truth in any of these respects."

I felt, of course, that we must admit, not only to ourselves but to others, the full force of the circumstances against him. Yet I knew withal (I could not help saying) that their weight would not induce us to desert him in his need.

"Heaven forbid!" returned my guardian. "We will stand by him, as he himself stood by the two poor creatures who are gone." He meant Mr. Gridley and the boy, to both of whom Mr. George had given shelter.

Mr. Woodcourt then told us that the trooper's man had been with him before day, after wandering about the streets all night like a distracted creature. That one of the trooper's first anxieties was that we should not suppose him guilty. That he had charged his messenger to represent his perfect innocence, with every solemn assurance he could send us. That Mr. Woodcourt had only quieted the man by undertaking to come to our house very early in the morning, with these representations. He added that he was now upon his way to see the prisoner himself.

My guardian said, directly, he would go too. Now, besides that I liked the retired soldier very much, and that he liked me, I had that secret interest in what had happened, which was only known to my guardian. I felt as if it came close and near to me. It seemed to become personally important to myself that the truth should be discovered, and that no innocent people should be suspected; for suspicion, once run wild, might run wilder.

In a word, I felt as if it were my duty and obligation to go with them. My guardian did not seek to dissuade me, and I went.

It was a large prison, with many courts and passages so like one another, and so uniformly paved, that I seemed to gain a new comprehension, as I passed along, of the fondness that solitary prisoners, shut up among the same staring walls from year to year, have had—as I have read—for a weed, or a stray blade of grass. In an arched room by himself, like a cellar up-stairs: with walls so glaringly white, that they made the massive iron window-bars and iron-bound door even more profoundly black than they were: we found the trooper standing in a corner. He had been sitting on a bench there, and had risen when he heard the locks and bolts turn.

When he saw us, he came forward a step with his usual heavy tread, and there

gainst me in the way of facts, is perfectly true; I know no more about it.' I ntend to continue stating that, sir. What more can I do? It's the truth."

"But the mere truth won't do," rejoined my guardian.

"Won't it, indeed, sir? Rather a bad look-out for me!" Mr. George good-umouredly observed.

"You must have a lawyer," pursued my guardian. "We must engage a good ne for you."

"I ask your pardon, sir," said Mr. George, with a step backward. "I am qually obliged. But I must decidedly beg to be excused from anything of that rt."

"You won't have a lawyer?"

"No, sir." Mr. George shook his head in the most emphatic manner. "I ank you all the same, sir, but—no lawyer!"

"Why not?"

"I don't take kindly to the breed," said Mr. George. "Gridley didn't. And—you'll excuse my saying so much—I should hardly have thought you did your-lf, sir."

"That's Equity," my guardian explained, a little at a loss; "that's Equity, eorge."

"Is it, indeed, sir?" returned the trooper, in his off-hand manner. "I am not quainted with those shades of names myself, but in a general way I object to e breed."

Unfolding his arms, and changing his position, he stood with one massive nd upon the table, and the other on his hip, as complete a picture of a man ho was not to be moved from a fixed purpose as ever I saw. It was in vain that e all three talked to him, and endeavoured to persuade him; he listened with at gentleness which went so well with his bluff bearing, but was evidently no ore shaken by our representations than his place of confinement was.

"Pray think, once more, Mr. George," said I. "Have you no wish, in refe-nce to your case?"

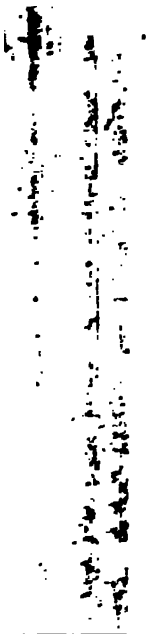
"I certainly could wish it to be tried, miss," he returned, "by court-martial; t that is out of the question, as I am well aware. If you will be so good as to vour me with your attention for a couple of minutes, miss, not more, I'll en-eavour to explain myself as clearly as I can."

He looked at us all three in turn, shook his head a little as if he were adjusting in the stock and collar of a tight uniform, and after a moment's reflection ent on.

"You see, miss, I have been handcuffed and taken into custody, and brought ere. I am a marked and disgraced man, and here I am. My shooting-gallery rummaged, high and low, by Bucket; such property as I have—'tis small—is rned this way and that, till it don't know itself; and (as aforesaid) here I am! don't particular complain of that. Though I am in these present quarters rough no immediately preceding fault of mine, I can very well understand that I had't gone into the vagabond way in my youth, this wouldn't have happened. t *has* happened. Then comes the question, how to meet it."

He rubbed his swarthy forehead for a moment, with a good-humoured look, and aid apologetically, "I am such a short-winded talker that I must think a bit." Having thought a bit, he looked up again, and resumed.

"How to meet it. Now, the unfortunate deceased was himself a lawyer, and ad a pretty tight hold of me. I don't wish to rake up his ashes, but he had, what should call if he was living, a Devil of a tight hold of me. I don't like his trade he better for that. If I had kept clear of his trade, I should have kept outside his place. But that's not what I mean. Now, suppose I had killed him. Sup-



what would he do, whether or
me not to commit myself, ke
quibble, and get me off perhaps
in that way; or would I rather
mentioning anything so disagree

He had warmed into his subje
a bit.

"I would rather be hanged in
tend to say," looking round upo
eyebrows raised, "that I am m
What I say is, I must come off cl
stated against me what is true, I
you say will be used,' I tell them
can't make me innocent out of th
anything less, or anything else.

Taking a pace or two over th
finished what he had to say.

"I thank you, miss, and gentle
many times more for your interes
points itself out to a mere trooper
never done well in life, beyond my
all, I shall reap pretty much as I
being seized as a murderer—it don
as myself, so very long to recover
you find me now. As such, I shal
or made unhappy for me, and—an

The door had been opened to a
possessing appearance at first sight
woman with a basket, who, from
all Mr. George had said. Mr. Ge
a friendly look, but with—
"

Mr. Bagnet, after considering, referred the point to his wife. "Old girl," said he. "Tell him. Whether or not. It meets my approval."

"Why, George," exclaimed Mrs. Bagnet, who had been unpacking her basket, in which there was a piece of cold pickled pork, a little tea and sugar, and a brown loaf, "you ought to know it don't. You ought to know it's enough to drive a person wild to hear you. You won't be got off this way, and you won't be got off that way—what do you mean by such picking and choosing? It's stuff and nonsense, George."

"Don't be severe upon me in my misfortunes, Mrs. Bagnet," said the trooper, lightly.

"Oh! Bother your misfortunes!" cried Mrs. Bagnet, "if they don't make you more reasonable than that comes to. I never was so ashamed in my life to hear a man talk folly, as I have been to hear you talk this day to the present company. Lawyers? Why, what but too many cooks should hinder you from having a dozen lawyers, if the gentleman recommended them to you."

"This is a very sensible woman," said my guardian. "I hope you will persuade him, Mrs. Bagnet."

"Persuade him, sir?" she returned. "Lord bless you, no. You don't know George. Now, there!" Mrs. Bagnet left her basket to point him out with both her bare brown hands. "There he stands! As self-willed and as determined a man, in the wrong way, as ever put a human creature under Heaven, out of patience! You could as soon take up and shoulder an eight-and-forty pounder by your own strength, as turn that man, when he has got a thing into his head, and fixed it there. Why, don't I know him!" cried Mrs. Bagnet. "Don't I know you, George! You don't mean to set up for a new character with *me*, after all these years, I hope?"

Her friendly indignation had an exemplary effect upon her husband, who shook his head at the trooper several times, as a silent recommendation to him to yield. Between whiles, Mrs. Bagnet looked at me; and I understood, from the play of her eyes, that she wished me to do something, though I did not comprehend what.

"But I have given up talking to you, old fellow, years and years," said Mrs. Bagnet, as she blew a little dust off the pickled pork, looking at me again; "and when ladies and gentlemen know you as well as I do, they'll give up talking to you too. If you are not too headstrong to accept of a bit of dinner, here it is."

"I accept it with many thanks," returned the trooper.

"Do you though, indeed?" said Mrs. Bagnet, continuing to grumble on good-humouredly. "I'm sure I'm surprised at that. I wonder you don't starve in your own way also. It would only be like you. Perhaps you'll set your mind upon *that*, next." Here she again looked at me; and I now perceived, from her glances at the door and at me, by turns, that she wished us to retire, and to await her following us, outside the prison. Communicating this by similar means to my guardian, and Mr. Woodcourt, I rose.

"We hope you will think better of it, Mr. George," said I; "and we shall come to see you again, trusting to find you more reasonable."

"More grateful, Miss Summerson, you can't find me," he returned.

"But more persuadable we can, I hope," said I. "And let me entreat you to consider that the clearing up of this mystery, and the discovery of the real perpetrator of this deed, may be of the last importance to others besides yourself."

He heard me respectfully, but without much heeding these words, which I spoke, a little turned from him, already on my way to the door; he was observing (this they afterwards told me) my height and figure, which seemed to catch his attention all at once.

"'Tis curious," said he. "And yet I thought so at the time!"

My guardian asked him what he meant.

"Why, sir," he answered, "when my ill-fortune took me to the dead staircase on the night of his murder, I saw a shape so like Miss Summerson me in the dark, that I had half a mind to speak to it."

For an instant, I felt such a shudder as I never felt before or since, and shall never feel again.

"It came down-stairs as I went up," said the trooper, "and crossed the lighted window with a loose black mantle on; I noticed a deep fring However, it has nothing to do with the present subject, excepting the Summerson looked so like it at the moment, that it came into my head."

I cannot separate and define the feelings that arose in me after this: it is that the vague duty and obligation I had felt upon me from the first of t the investigation, was, without my distinctly daring to ask myself any q increased; and that I was indignantly sure of there being no possibility of for my being afraid.

We three went out of the prison, and walked up and down at som distance from the gate, which was in a retired place. We had not wait when Mr. and Mrs. Bagnet came out too, and quickly joined us.

There was a tear in each of Mrs. Bagnet's eyes, and her face was flu hurried. "I didn't let George see what I thought about it, you know, m her first remark when she came up; "but he's in a bad way, poor old fell

"Not with care and prudence, and good help," said my guardian.

"A gentleman like you ought to know best, sir," returned Mrs. hurriedly drying her eyes on the hem of her grey cloak; "but I am u him. He has been so careless, and said so much that he never meant gentlemen of the juries might not understand him as Lignum and me d then such a number of circumstances have happened bad for him, and such ber of people will be brought forward to speak against him, and Bucket is s

"With a second-hand wiolinceller. And said he played the fife. boy." Mr. Bagnet added, with great solemnity.

"Now, I tell you, miss," said Mrs. Bagnet; "and when I say miss, I m Just come into the corner of the wall, and I'll tell you!"

Mrs. Bagnet hurried us into a more secluded place, and was at first too less to proceed; occasioning Mr. Bagnet to say, "Old girl! Tell 'em!"

"Why, then, miss," the old girl proceeded, untying the strings of he for more air, "you could as soon move Dover Castle as move George on th unless you had got a new power to move him with. And I have got it!"

"You are a jewel of a woman," said my guardian. "Go on!"

"Now, I tell you, miss," she proceeded, clapping her hands in her h agitation a dozen times in every sentence, "that what he says concer relations is all bosh. They don't know of him, but he does know of the has said more to me at odd times than to anybody else, and it warn't for that he once spoke to my Woolwich about whitening and wrinkling heads. For fifty pounds he had seen his mother that day. She's alive, a be brought here straight!"

Instantly Mrs. Bagnet put some pins into her mouth, and began pinning skirts all round, a little higher than the level of her grey cloak; which she plished with surpassing dispatch and dexterity.

"Lignum," said Mrs. Bagnet, "you take care of the children, old man, me the umbrella! I'm away to Lincolnshire, to bring that old lady here."

"But, bless the woman!" cried my guardian with his hand in his pocke *is she going?* What money has she got?"

et made another application to her skirts, and brought forth a leathern
h she hastily counted over a few shillings, and which she then shut
ct satisfaction.
u mind for me, miss. I'm a soldier's wife, and accustomed to travel
. Lignum, old boy," kissing him, "one for yourself; three for the
ow, I'm away into Lincolnshire after George's mother!"
ctually set off while we three stood looking at one another lost in
She actually trudged away in her grey cloak at a sturdy pace, and
rner, and was gone.
net," said my guardian. "Do you mean to let her go in that way?"
lp it," he returned. "Made her way home once. From another
world. With the same grey cloak. And same umbrella. What-
girl says, do. Do it! Whenever the old girl says, *I'll* do it. She

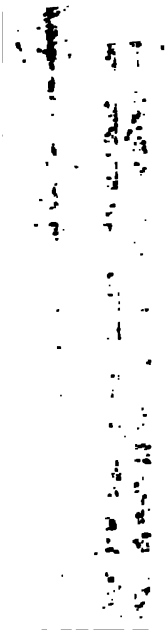
is as honest and genuine as she looks," rejoined my guardian, "and
le to say more for her."
lour-Serjeant of the Nonpareil battalion," said Mr. Bagnet, looking
shoulder, as he went his way also. "And there's not such another.
wn to it before her. Discipline must be maintained."

CHAPTER LIII.

THE TRACK.

T and his fat forefinger are much in consultation together under
mstances. When Mr. Bucket has a matter of this pressing interest
sideration, the fat forefinger seems to rise to the dignity of a familiar
puts it to his ears, and it whispers information; he puts it to his
njoins him to secrecy; he rubs it over his nose, and it sharpens his
kes it before a guilty man, and it charms him to his destruction. The
e Detective Temple invariably predict, that when Mr. Bucket and
re in much conference, a terrible avenger will be heard of before

mildly studious in his observation of human nature, on the whole a
losopher not disposed to be severe upon the follies of mankind, Mr.
des a vast number of houses, and strolls about an infinity of streets:
ppearance rather languishing for want of an object. He is in the
ndition towards his species, and will drink with most of them. He
is money, affable in his manners, innocent in his conversation—but,
lacid stream of his life, there glides an under-current of forefinger.
lace cannot bind Mr. Bucket. Like man in the abstract, he is here
one to-morrow—but, very unlike man indeed, he is here again the
his evening he will be casually looking into the iron extinguishers at
ir Leicester Dedlock's house in town; and to-morrow morning he
g on the leads at Chesney Wold, where erst the old man walked
is propitiated with a hundred guineas. Drawers, desks, pockets, all
ing to him, Mr. Bucket examines. A few hours afterwards, he and
ill be alone together, comparing forefingers.
that these occupations are irreconcilable with home enjoyment, but



...and the debilitated cousi
inconsolable carriages is immet
affliction than has ever been see
of armorial bearings on coach
posed to have lost its father an
a splendid pile of dust and asl
last improvements, and three be
a bunch of woe. All the state
ing; and if that dead old man
flesh (which appears impossible)

Quiet among the undertakers
legs all steeped in grief, Mr. Buc
riages, and at his ease surveys tl
keen eye for a crowd—as for wha
this side of the carriage, now fror
along the people's heads, nothing

"And there you are, my part
phising Mrs. Bucket, stationed,
house. "And so you are. An
looking, Mrs. Bucket!"

The procession has not started
blage to be brought out. Mr. Bu
his two fat forefingers to hold the l

And it says a great deal for his
pied with Mrs. B. "There you
"And our lodger with you. I'r
you're all right in your health, my

Not another word does Mr. Bu
the sacked depository of noble s
secrets now? Does he keep the
journey?—and until the process
After which

uch of, where he knows the whole establishment, and walks in an atmosphere of ysterious greatness.

No knocking or ringing for Mr. Bucket. He has caused himself to be pro-ded with a key, and can pass in at his pleasure. As he is crossing the hall, Mercury informs him, "Here's another letter for you, Mr. Bucket, come by post," nd gives it him.

"Another one, eh?" says Mr. Bucket.

If Mercury should chance to be possessed by any lingering curiosity as to Mr. ucket's letters, that wary person is not the man to gratify it. Mr. Bucket looks him, as if his face were a vista of some miles in length, and he were leisurely ontemplating the same.

"Do you happen to carry a box?" says Mr. Bucket.

Unfortunately Mercury is no snuff-taker.

"Could you fetch me a pinch from anywheres?" says Mr. Bucket. "Thankee. don't matter what it is; I'm not particular as to the kind. Thankee!"

Having leisurely helped himself from a canister borrowed from somebody own-stairs for the purpose, and having made a considerable show of tasting it, rst with one side of his nose and then with the other, Mr. Bucket, with much eliberation, pronounces it of the right sort, and goes on, letter in hand.

Now, although Mr. Bucket walks up-stairs to the little library within the rger one, with the face of a man who receives some scores of letters every day, happens that much correspondence is not incidental to his life. He is no great cribe; rather handling his pen like the pocket-staff he carries about with him lways convenient to his grasp; and discourages correspondence with himself others, as being too artless and direct a way of doing delicate business. Fur-her, he often sees damaging letters produced in evidence, and has occasion to eflect that it was a green thing to write them. For these reasons he has very ittle to do with letters, either as sender or receiver. And yet he has received a ound half-dozen, within the last twenty-four hours.

"And this," says Mr. Bucket, spreading it out on the table, "is in the same and, and consists of the same two words."

What two words?

He turns the key in the door, ungirdles his black pocket-book (book of fate to any), lays another letter by it, and reads, boldly written in each, "LADY DED-OCK."

"Yes, yes," says Mr. Bucket. "But I could have made the money without his anonymous information."

Having put the letters in his book of Fate, and girdled it up again, he unlocks he door just in time to admit his dinner, which is brought upon a goodly tray, with a decanter of sherry. Mr. Bucket frequently observes, in friendly circles where there is no restraint, that he likes a toothful of your fine old brown East nder sherry better than anything you can offer him. Consequently he fills and mpties his glass, with a smack of his lips; and is proceeding with his refresh-ment, when an idea enters his mind.

Mr. Bucket softly opens the door of communication between that room and he next, and looks in. The library is deserted, and the fire is sinking low. Mr. Bucket's eye, after taking a pigeon-flight round the room, alights upon a table where letters are usually put as they arrive. Several letters for Sir Leicester are pon it. Mr. Bucket draws near, and examines the directions. "No," he says, there's none in that hand. It's only me as is written to. I can break it to Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet, to-morrow."

With that he returns to finish his dinner with a good appetite; and after a light nap, is summoned into the drawing-room. Sir Leicester has received him there

view to the vindication of the c

Mr. Bucket coughs, and glan
he would respectfully observe,
seen hundreds worse-looking at

The fair Volumnia, not quite
of her charms, pauses in the wri
the pearl necklace. Mr. Bucket
as likely as not that Volumnia is

"If I have not," pursues Sir
jured you, officer, to exercise yo
larly desire to take the present o
made. Let no expense be a con
You can incur none, in pursuit
hesitate for a moment to bear."

Mr. Bucket made Sir Leicester

"My mind," Sir Leicester adc
easily supposed, recovered its tone
likely ever to recover its tone. B
going the ordeal of consigning to
devoted adherent."

Sir Leicester's voice trembles, ar
in his eyes; the best part of his nat

"I declare," he says, "I solemnly
in the course of justice, punished,
name. A gentleman who has devo
who has devoted the last day of hi
sat at my table and slept under my
struck down within an hour of his l
may have been followed from my hc
because of his association with my h

ath levels all distinctions; "was held by the flower of the land, has, I say, gravated the shock I have received from this most horrible and audacious crime. it were my brother who had committed it, I would not spare him."

Mr. Bucket looks very grave. Volumnia remarks of the deceased that he was e trustiest and dearest person!

"You must feel it as a deprivation to you, miss," replies Mr. Bucket, soothingly, no doubt. He was calculated to *be* a deprivation, I'm sure he was."

Volumnia gives Mr. Bucket to understand, in reply, that her sensitive mind is lly made up never to get the better of it as long as she lives; that her nerves e unstrung for ever; and that she has not the least expectation of ever smiling ain. Meanwhile she folds up a cocked hat for that redoubtable old general at ath, descriptive of her melancholy condition.

"It gives a start to a delicate female," says Mr. Bucket, sympathetically, "but ll wear off."

Volumnia wishes of all things to know what is doing? Whether they are ing to convict, or whatever it is, that dreadful soldier? Whether he had any complices, or whatever the thing is called in the law? And a great deal more the like artless purpose.

"Why you see, miss," returns Mr. Bucket, bringing the finger into persuasive tion—and such is his natural gallantry, that he had almost said, my dear; "it n't easy to answer those questions at the present moment. Not at the present oment. I've kept myself on this case, Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet," whom r. Bucket takes into the conversation in right of his importance, "morning, on, and night. But for a glass or two of sherry, I don't think I could have d my mind so much upon the stretch as it has been. I *could* answer your estions, miss, but duty forbids it. Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet, will very soon made acquainted with all that has been traced. And I hope that he may find ;" Mr. Bucket again looks grave; "to his satisfaction."

The debilitated cousin only hopes some fler'll be executed—zample. Thinks ore interest 's wanted—get man hanged presentime—than get man place ten ousand a year. Hasn't a doubt—zample—far better hang wrong fler than no r.

"*You* know life, you know, sir," says Mr. Bucket, with a complimentary twinkle his eye and crook of his finger, "and you can confirm what I've mentioned this lady. *You* don't want to be told, that, from information I have received, I ve gone to work. You're up to what a lady can't be expected to be up to. ord! especially in your elevated station of society, miss," says Mr. Bucket, quite ddening at another narrow escape from my dear.

"The officer, Volumnia," observes Sir Leicester, "is faithful to his duty, and rfectly right."

Mr. Bucket murmurs, "Glad to have the honour o your approbation, Sir Leiester Dedlock, Baronet."

"In fact, Volumnia," proceeds Sir Leicester, "it is not holding up a good odel for imitation, to ask the officer any such questions as you have put to him. e is the best judge of his own responsibility; he acts upon his responsibility. nd it does not become us, who assist in making the laws, to impede or interfere ith those who carry them into execution. Or," says Sir Leicester, somewhat rmly, for Volumnia was going to cut in before he had rounded his sentence; or who vindicate their outraged majesty."

Volumnia with all humility explains that she has not merely the plea of curiosity urge (in common with the giddy youth of her sex in general), but that she is rfectly dying with regret and interest for the darling man whose loss they all eplore.

"Very well, Volumnia," returns Sir Leicester. "Then you cannot be to creet."

Mr. Bucket takes the opportunity of a pause to be heard again.

"Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet, I have no objections to telling this lady your leave and among ourselves, that I look upon the case as pretty well com It is a beautiful case—a beautiful case—and what little is wanting to compl I expect to be able to supply in a few hours."

"I am very glad indeed to hear it," says Sir Leicester. "Highly credita you."

"Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet," returns Mr. Bucket, very seriously, "I it may at one and th dit, and prove satisfactory to all. I depict it as a ber," Mr. Bucket goes on, glancing g at Sir Leicester. " f view. As considered from other of view, such c e or less unpleasantness. Very s things comes to miss; bless your heart, what you think to be phe... Volumnia, with ... n, supposes so.

"Aye, and even high families, in great families, Mr. Bucket, again g ster aside. "I have had the hon being employed in h... d you have no idea—come, I'll go as to say not even *you* ha... " this to the debilitated cousin, " games goes on!"

The cousin, who has been casting sofa-pillows on his head, in a prostrati boredom, yawns, "Vayli"—being the used-up for "very likely."

Sir Leicester, deeming it time to dismiss the officer, here majestically inte with the words, "Very good. Thank you!" and also with a wave of his implying not only that there is an end of the discourse, but that if high fa fall into low habits they must take the consequences. "You will not f officer," he adds, with condescension, "that I am at your disposal whe please."

Mr. Bucket (still grave) inquires if to-morrow morning, now, would suit, i he should be as for'ard as he expects to be? Sir Leicester replies, "All tim alike to me." Mr. Bucket makes his three bows, and is withdrawing, w forgotten point occurs to him.

"Might I ask, by-the-bye," he says, in a low voice, cautiously returning, posted the Reward-bill on the staircase."

"*I* ordered it to be put up there," replies Sir Leicester.

"Would it be considered a liberty, Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet, if I ask you why?"

"Not at all. I chose it as a conspicuous part of the house. I think it c be too prominently kept before the whole establishment. I wish my people impressed with the enormity of the crime, the determination to punish it, a hopelessness of escape. At the same time, officer, if you in your better know of the subject see any objection——"

Mr. Bucket sees none now; the bill having been put up, had better not be down. Repeating his three bows he withdraws: closing the door on Volu little scream, which is a preliminary to her remarking that that charmingly h person is a perfect Blue Chamber.

In his fondness for society, and his adaptability to all grades, Mr. Bu presently standing before the hall-fire—bright and warm on the early winter —admiring Mercury.

"Why, you're six foot two, I suppose?" says Mr. Bucket.

"Three," says Mercury.

"Are you so much? But then, you see, you're broad in proportion, and don't ook it. You're not one of the weak-legged ones, you ain't. Was you ever odelled now?" Mr. Bucket asks, conveying the expression of an artist into the rn of his eye and head.

Mercury never was modelled.

"Then you ought to be, you know," says Mr. Bucket; "and a friend of mine at you'll hear of one day as a Royal Academy Sculptor, would stand something ndsome to make a drawing of your proportions for the marble. My Lady's out, n't she?"

"Out to dinner."

"Goes out pretty well every day, don't she?"

"Yes."

"Not to be wondered at!" says Mr. Bucket. "Such a fine woman as her, so ndsome and so graceful and so elegant, is like a fresh lemon on a dinner-table, rnamental wherever she goes. Was your father in the same way of life as ourself?"

Answer in the negative.

"Mine was," says Mr. Bucket. "My father was first a page, then a footman, en a butler, then a steward, then an innkeeper. Lived universally respected, and ed lamented. Said with his last breath that he considered service the most hon-rable part of his career, and so it was. I've a brother in service, *and* a brother-in-w. My Lady a good temper?"

Mercury replies, "As good as you can expect."

"Ah!" says Mr. Bucket, "a little spoilt? A little capricious? Lord! What an you anticipate when they're so handsome as that? And we like 'em all the etter for it, don't we?"

Mercury, with his hands in the pockets of his bright peach-blossom small-clothes, retches his symmetrical silk legs with the air of a man of gallantry, and can't eny it. Come the roll of wheels and a violent ringing at the bell. "Talk of the ngels," says Mr. Bucket. "Here she is!"

The doors are thrown open, and she passes through the hall. Still very pale, he is dressed in slight mourning, and wears two beautiful bracelets. Either their eauty, or the beauty of her arms, is particularly attractive to Mr. Bucket. He oks at them with an eager eye, and rattles something in his pocket—halfpence erhaps.

Noticing him at his distance, she turns an inquiring look on the other Mercury ho has brought her home.

"Mr. Bucket, my Lady."

Mr. Bucket makes a leg, and comes forward, passing his familiar demon over the rgion of his mouth.

"Are you waiting to see Sir Leicester?"

"No, my Lady, I've seen him!"

"Have you anything to say to me?"

"Not just at present, my Lady."

"Have you made any new discoveries?"

"A few, my Lady."

This is merely in passing. She scarcely makes a stop, and sweeps up-stairs alone. Mr. Bucket, moving towards the staircase-foot, watches her as she goes up the eps the old man came down to his grave; past murderous groups of statuary, peated with their shadowy weapons on the wall; past the printed bill, which she oks at going by; out of view.

"She's a lovely woman, too, she really is," says Mr. Bucket, coming back to Mercury. "Don't look quite healthy though."

"I suppose you ain't in the h
"Not much time for it, I should s
Besides which, Mercury don't li
"To be sure," says Mr. Bucke
it," says Mr. Bucket, warming h
"she went out walking, the very ni
"To be sure she did! I let her
"And left her there. Certainly
"I didn't see *you*," says Mercury
"I was rather in a hurry," return
of mine that lives at Chelsea—next
ninety year old the old lady is, a sin
chanced to be passing at the time.
ten."
"Half-past nine."
"You're right. So it was. And
fled in a loose black mantle, with a d
"Of course she was."
Of course she was. Mr. Bucket
with up-stairs; but he must shake ha
agreeable conversation, and will he—
leisure half-hour, think of bestowing
advantage of both parties?

CHAP

that whenever he's ready for me, I'm ready for him." A gracious message being returned, that Sir Leicester will expedite his dressing and join Mr. Bucket in the library within ten minutes, Mr. Bucket repairs to that apartment; and stands before the fire, with his finger on his chin, looking at the blazing coals.

Thoughtful Mr. Bucket is; as a man may be, with weighty work to do; but composed, sure, confident. From the expression of his face, he might be a famous whist-player for a large stake—say a hundred guineas certain—with the game in his hand, but with a high reputation involved in his playing his hand out to the last card, in a masterly way. Not in the least anxious or disturbed is Mr. Bucket, when Sir Leicester appears; but he eyes the baronet aside as he comes slowly to his easy-chair, with that observant gravity of yesterday, in which there might have been yesterday, but for the audacity of the idea, a touch of compassion.

"I am sorry to have kept you waiting, officer, but I am rather later than my usual hour this morning. I am not well. The agitation, and the indignation from which I have recently suffered, have been too much for me. I am subject to—gout;" Sir Leicester was going to say indisposition, and would have said it to anybody else, but Mr. Bucket palpably knows all about it; "and recent circumstances have brought it on."

As he takes his seat with some difficulty, and with an air of pain, Mr. Bucket draws a little nearer, standing with one of his large hands on the library-table.

"I am not aware, officer," Sir Leicester observes, raising his eyes to his face, "whether you wish us to be alone; but that is entirely as you please. If you do, well and good. If not, Miss Dedlock would be interested——"

"Why, Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet," returns Mr. Bucket, with his head persuasively on one side, and his forefinger pendant at one ear like an ear-ring, "we can't be too private, just at present. You will presently see that we can't be too private. A lady, under the circumstances, and especially in Miss Dedlock's elevated station of society, can't but be agreeable to me; but speaking without a view to myself, I will take the liberty of assuring you that I know we can't be too private."

"That is enough."

"So much so, Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet," Mr. Bucket resumes, "that I was on the point of asking your permission to turn the key in the door."

"By all means." Mr. Bucket skilfully and softly takes that precaution; stooping on his knee for a moment, from mere force of habit, so to adjust the key in the lock as that no one shall peep in from the outerside.

"Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet, I mentioned yesterday evening, that I wanted but a very little to complete this case. I have now completed it, and collected proof against the person who did this crime."

"Against the soldier?"

"No, Sir Leicester Dedlock; not the soldier."

Sir Leicester looks astounded, and inquires, "Is the man in custody?"

Mr. Bucket tells him, after a pause, "It was a woman."

Sir Leicester leans back in his chair, and breathlessly ejaculates, "Good Heaven!"

"Now, Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet," Mr. Bucket begins, standing over him with one hand spread out on the library-table, and the forefinger of the other in impressive use, "it's my duty to prepare you for a train of circumstances that may, and I go so far as to say that will, give you a shock. But Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet, you are a gentleman; and I know what a gentleman is, and what a gentleman is capable of. A gentleman can bear a shock, when it must come, boldly and steadily. A gentleman can make up his mind to stand up against almost any blow. Why, take yourself, Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet. You're

a blow to be inflicted on you, you naturally think of your family. You a
self, how would all them ancestors of yours, away to Julius Cæsar—not t
yond him at present—have borne that blow; you remember scores of th
would have borne it well; and you bear it well on their accounts, and to r
the family credit. That's the way you argue, and that's the way you
Leicester Dedlock, Baronet."

Sir Leicester, leaning back in his chair, and grasping the elbows, sits lo
him with a stony face.

"Now, Sir Leicester Dedlock," proceeds Mr. Bucket, "thus preparing
me beg of you not to trouble your mind, for a moment, as to anything hav
to *my* knowledge ut so many characters, high and l
a piece of infor t signify a straw. I don't suppos
a move on the *me*; and as to this or that mov
taken place, odds at all; any possible move
(provided it's a probable move according to
rience. Therefi Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet,
you go and let e way, because of my knowing
of your family a...

"I thank you f eturns Sir Leicester, after a silen
out moving hand, ich I hope is not necessary, thoug
it credit for being well good as to go on. Also;" Sir
seems to shrink in the shadow of his figure; "also, to take a seat, if
no objection."

None at all. Mr. Bucket brings a chair, and diminishes his shadow.
Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet, with this short preface I come to the poin
Dedlock——"

Sir Leicester raises himself in his seat, and stares at him fiercely. Mr.
brings the finger into play as an emollient.

"Lady Dedlock, you see she's universally admired. That's what her l
is; she's universally admired," says Mr. Bucket.

"I would greatly prefer, officer," Sir Leicester returns, stiffly, "my Lad
being entirely omitted from this discussion."

"So would I, Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet, but—it's impossible."

"Impossible?"

Mr. Bucket shakes his relentless head.

"Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet, it's altogether impossible. What I
to say, is about her Ladyship. She is the pivot it all turns on."

"Officer," retorts Sir Leicester, with a fiery eye, and a quivering lip, "y
your duty. Do your duty; but be careful not to overstep it. I would n
it. I would not endure it. You bring my Lady's name into this commu
upon your responsibility—upon your responsibility. My Lady's name is no
for common persons to trifle with!"

"Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet, I say what I must say; and no more.

"I hope it may prove so. Very well. Go on. Go on, sir!"

Glancing at the angry eyes which now avoid him, and at the angry figu
bling from head to foot, yet striving to be still, Mr. Bucket feels his way
forefinger, and in a low voice proceeds.

"Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet, it becomes my duty to tell you
deceased Mr. Tulkinghorn long entertained mistrusts and suspicions of La
lock."

"If he had dared to breathe them to me, sir—which he never did—I wo
killed him myself!" exclaims Sir Leicester, striking his hand upon the tab
in the very heat and fury of the act, he stops, fixed by the knowing eyes

Bucket, whose forefinger is slowly going, and who, with mingled confidence and patience, shakes his head.

"Sir Leicester Dedlock, the deceased Mr. Tulkinghorn was deep and close; and what he fully had in his mind in the very beginning, I can't quite take upon myself to say. But I know from his lips, that he long ago suspected Lady Dedlock of having discovered, through the sight of some handwriting—in this very house, and when you yourself, Sir Leicester Dedlock, were present—the existence, in great poverty, of a certain person, who had been her lover before you courted her, and who ought to have been her husband;" Mr. Bucket stops, and deliberately repeats, "ought to have been her husband; not a doubt about it. I know from his lips, that when that person soon afterwards died, he suspected Lady Dedlock of visiting his wretched lodging, and his wretched grave, alone and in secret. I know from my own inquiries, and through my eyes and ears, that Lady Dedlock did make such visit, in the dress of her own maid; for the deceased Mr. Tulkinghorn employed me to reckon up her Ladyship—if you'll excuse my making use of the term we commonly employ—and I reckoned her up, so far, completely. I confronted the maid, in the chambers in Lincoln's Inn Fields, with a witness who had been Lady Dedlock's guide; and there couldn't be the shadow of a doubt that she had worn the young woman's dress, unknown to her. Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet, I did endeavour to pave the way a little towards these unpleasant disclosures, yesterday, by saying that very strange things happened even in high families sometimes. All this, and more, has happened in your own family, and to and through your own Lady. It's my belief that the deceased Mr. Tulkinghorn followed up these inquiries to the hour of his death; and that he and Lady Dedlock even had bad blood between them upon the matter, that very night. Now, only you put that to Lady Dedlock, Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet; and ask her Ladyship whether, even after he had left here, she didn't go down to his chambers with the intention of saying something further to him, dressed in a loose black mantle with a deep fringe to it."

Sir Leicester sits like a statue, gazing at the cruel finger that is probing the life-blood of his heart.

"You put that to her Ladyship, Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet, from me, Inspector Bucket of the Detective. And if her Ladyship makes any difficulty about admitting of it, you tell her that it's no use; that Inspector Bucket knows it, and knows that she passed the soldier as you called him (though he's not in the army now), and knows that she knows she passed him, on the staircase. Now, Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet, why do I relate all this?"

Sir Leicester, who has covered his face with his hands, uttering a single groan, requests him to pause for a moment. By-and-by he takes his hands away; and so preserves his dignity and outward calmness, though there is no more colour in his face than in his white hair, that Mr. Bucket is a little awed by him. Something frozen and fixed is upon his manner, over and above its usual shell of haughtiness; and Mr. Bucket soon detects an unusual slowness in his speech, with now and then a curious trouble in beginning, which occasions him to utter inarticulate sounds. With such sounds, he now breaks silence; soon, however, controlling himself to say, that he does not comprehend why a gentleman so faithful and zealous as the late Mr. Tulkinghorn should have communicated to him nothing of this painful, this distressing, this unlooked-for, this overwhelming, this incredible intelligence.

"Again, Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet," returns Mr. Bucket, "put it to her Ladyship to clear that up. Put it to her Ladyship, if you think it right, from Inspector Bucket of the Detective. You'll find, or I'm much mistaken, that the deceased Mr. Tulkinghorn had the intention of communicating the whole to you, as soon as he considered it ripe; and further, that he had given her Ladyship so

to understand. Why, he might have been going to reveal it the very mo
when I examined the body! You don't know what I'm going to say and d
minutes from this present time, Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet; and supp
I was to be picked off now, you might wonder why I hadn't done it, don
see?"

True. Sir Leicester, avoiding, with some trouble, those obtrusive sounds
"True." At this juncture, a considerable noise of voices is heard in the hall.
Bucket, after listening, goes to the library-door, softly unlocks and opens i
listens again. Then he draws in his head, and whispers, hurriedly, but compo
"Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet, this unfortunate family affair has taken an
expected it mi[illegible]ilkinghorn being cut down so su
The chance to eople now in a wrangle with your
men. Would the family account—while I reckn
up? And woul , when I seem to ask you for it?"
Sir Leicester " ficer. The best you can, the bes
can!" and Mr. sagacious crook of the forefinger.
down into the l kly die away. He is not long in r
ing, a few pace a brother deity also powdered a
peach-blossome n them a chair in which is an inca
old man. Anot come behind. Directing the pitch
the chair, in an [illegible] Mr. Bucket dismisses the Mercurie
locks the door again. Sir Leicester looks on at this invasion of the sacred
cincts with an icy stare.

"Now, perhaps you may know me, ladies and gentlemen," says Mr. Buck
a confidential voice. "I am Inspector Bucket of the Detective, I am; and
producing the tip of his convenient little staff from his breast-pocket, "
authority. Now, you wanted to see Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet. Y
You do see him; and, mind you, it ain't every one as is admitted to that ho
Your name, old gentleman, is Smallweed; that's what your name is; I kn
well."

"Well, and you never heard any harm of it!" cries Mr. Swallweed in a
loud voice.

"You don't happen to know why they killed the pig, do you?" retort
Bucket, with a steadfast look, but without loss of temper.

"No!"

"Why, they killed him," says Mr. Bucket, "on account of his having so
cheek. Don't *you* get into the same position, because it isn't worthy of you.
ain't in the habit of conversing with a deaf person, are you?"

"Yes," snarls Mr. Smallweed, "my wife's deaf."

"That accounts for your pitching your voice so high. But as she ain't
just pitch it an octave or two lower, will you, and I'll not only be obliged t
but it'll do you more credit," says Mr. Bucket. "This other gentleman is
preaching line, I think?"

"Name of Chadband," Mr. Smallweed puts in, speaking henceforth in a
lower key.

"Once had a friend and brother serjeant of the same name," says Mr. B
offering his hand, "and consequently feel a liking for it. Mrs. Chadban
doubt?"

"And Mrs. Snagsby," Mr. Smallweed introduces.

"Husband a law-stationer, and a friend of my own," says Mr. Bucket.
him like a brother!—Now, what's up?"

"Do you mean what business have we come upon?" Mr. Smallweed a
little dashed by the suddenness of this turn.

"Ah! You know what I mean. Let us hear what it's all about in presence of Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet. Come."

Mr. Smallweed, beckoning Mr. Chadband, takes a moment's counsel with him in a whisper. Mr. Chadband, expressing a considerable amount of oil from the pores of his forehead and the palms of his hands, says aloud, "Yes. You first!" and retires to his former place.

"I was the client and friend of Mr. Tulkinghorn," pipes Grandfather Smallweed, then; "I did business with him. I was useful to him, and he was useful to me. Krook, dead and gone, was my brother-in-law. He was own brother to a brimstone magpie—leastways Mrs. Smallweed. I come into Krook's property. I examined all his papers and all his effects. They was all dug out under my eyes. There was a bundle of letters belonging to a dead and gone lodger, as was hid away at the back of a shelf in the side of Lady Jane's bed—his cat's bed. He hid all manner of things away, everywheres. Mr. Tulkinghorn wanted 'em and got 'em, but I looked 'em over first. I'm a man of business, and I took a squint at 'em. They was letters from the lodger's sweetheart, and she signed Honoria. Dear me, that's not a common name, Honoria, is it? There's no lady in this house that signs Honoria, is there? O no, I don't think so! O no, I don't think so! And not in the same hand, perhaps? O no, I don't think so!"

Here Mr. Smallweed, seized with a fit of coughing in the midst of his triumph, breaks off to ejaculate, "O dear me! O Lord! I'm shaken all to pieces!"

"Now, when you're ready," says Mr. Bucket, after awaiting his recovery, "to come to anything that concerns Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet, here the gentleman sits, you know."

"Haven't I come to it, Mr. Bucket?" cries Grandfather Smallweed. "Isn't the gentleman concerned yet? Not with Captain Hawdon, and his ever affectionate Honoria, and their child into the bargain? Come, then, I want to know where those letters are. That concerns me, if it don't concern Sir Leicester Dedlock. I will know where they are. I won't have 'em disappear so quietly. I handed 'em over to my friend and solicitor, Mr. Tulkinghorn; not to anybody else."

"Why he paid you for them, you know, and handsome too," says Mr. Bucket.

"I don't care for that. I want to know who's got 'em. And I tell you what we want—what we all here want, Mr. Bucket. We want more painstaking and search-making into this murder. We know where the interest and the motive was, and you have not done enough. If George the vagabond dragoon had any hand in it, he was only an accomplice, and was set on. You know what I mean as well as any man."

"Now I tell you what," says Mr. Bucket, instantaneously altering his manner, coming close to him, and communicating an extraordinary fascination to the forefinger, "I am damned if I am a-going to have my case spoilt, or interfered with, or anticipated by so much as half a second of time, by any human being in creation. *You* want more painstaking and search-making? *You* do? Do you see this hand, and do you think that *I* don't know the right time to stretch it out, and put it on the arm that fired that shot?"

Such is the dread power of the man, and so terribly evident it is that he makes no idle boast, that Mr. Smallweed begins to apologise. Mr. Bucket, dismissing his sudden anger, checks him.

"The advice I give you, is, don't you trouble your head about the murder. That's my affair. You keep half an eye on the newspapers; and I shouldn't wonder if you was to read something about it before long, if you look sharp. I know my business, and that's all I've got to say to you on that subject. Now about those letters. You want to know who's got 'em. I don't mind telling you. *I* have got 'em. Is that the packet?"

"Whe[illegible] we to hear more of this?" Mrs. Chadband sternly de
"Ble[illegible] r heart for a true woman! Always curious, your deli
replies [illegible] ucket, with gallantry. "I shall have the pleasure o
call to-[illegible] v or next day—not forgetting Mr. Smallweed and his p
fifty."

"Five [illegible] dred!" exclaims Mr. Smallweed.

"All [illegible] ! Nominally five hundred;" Mr. Bucket has his han
rope; "[illegible] I wish you good day for the present, on the part of
gentlem[illegible] the house?" he asks in an insinuating tone.

Nobo[illegible] ving the hardihood to object to his doing so, he does it
retire a[illegible] follows them to the door;
says wit[illegible]

"Sir [illegible] it's for you to consider whethe
this up. [illegible] e whole, it's being bought up
think it [illegible] You see, that little pickled c
Mrs. S[illegible] ides of the speculation, and h
more h[illegible] nds together than if she had
Tulkin[illegible] ese horses in his hand, and co
'em hi[illegible] ay, [illegible] but he was fetched off the box
and nc[illegible] have [illegible] the traces, and are all draggi
their o[illegible] s. [illegible] is life. The cat's away, and
play; the frost breaks up, and the water runs. Now, with regard
be apprehended."

Sir Leicester seems to wake, though his eyes have been wide open
intently at Mr. Bucket, as Mr. Bucket refers to his watch.

"The party to be apprehended is now in this house," procee
putting up his watch with a steady hand, and with rising spirits, "
to take her into custody in your presence. Sir Leicester Dedlock,
you say a word, nor yet stir. There'll be no noise, and no disturba
come back in the course of the evening, if agreeable to you, and
meet your wishes respecting this unfortunate family matter, and the
of keeping it quiet. Now, Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet, don't y
on account of the apprehension at present coming off. You shall
case clear, from first to last."

Mr. Bucket rings, goes to the door, briefly whispers Mercury, s
and stands behind it with his arms folded. After a suspense of a
the door slowly opens, and a French woman enters. Mademoiselle

The moment she is in the room, Mr. Bucket claps the door to, an
against it. The suddenness of the noise occasions her to turn; an
first time she sees Sir Leicester Dedlock in his chair.

"I ask you pardon," she mutters hurriedly. "They tell me the
here."

Her step towards the door brings her front to front with Mr. Buck
a spasm shoots across her face, and she turns deadly pale.

"This is my lodger, Sir Leicester Dedlock," says Mr. Bucket, n
"This foreign young woman has been my lodger for some weeks ba

"What do Sir Leicester care for that, you think, my angel?"
moiselle, in a jocular strain.

"Why, my angel," returns Mr. Bucket, "we shall see."

Mademoiselle Hortense eyes him with a scowl upon her tigh
gradually changes into a smile of scorn. "You are very mysterie
drunk?"

"Tolerable sober, my angel," returns Mr. Bucket.

"I come from arriving at this so detestable house with your wife. Your wife have left me, since some minutes. They tell me down-stairs that your wife is here. I come here, and your wife is not here. What is the intention of this fool's play, say then?" Mademoiselle demands, with her arms composedly crossed, but with something in her dark cheek beating like a clock.

Mr. Bucket merely shakes the finger at her.

"Ah my God, you are an unhappy idiot!" cries Mademoiselle, with a toss of her head and a laugh.—"Leave me to pass down-stairs, great pig." With a stamp of her foot, and a menace.

"Now, Mademoiselle," says Mr. Bucket, in a cool determined way, "you go and sit down upon that sofy."

"I will not sit down upon nothing," she replies, with a shower of nods.

"Now, Mademoiselle," repeats Mr. Bucket, making no demonstration, except with the finger; "you sit down upon that sofy."

"Why?"

"Because I take you into custody on a charge of murder, and you don't need to be told it. Now, I want to be polite to one of your sex and a foreigner, if I can. If I can't, I must be rough; and there's rougher ones outside. What I am to be, depends on you. So I recommend you, as a friend, afore another half a blessed moment has passed over your head, to go and sit down upon that sofy."

Mademoiselle complies, saying in a concentrated voice, while that something in her cheek beats fast and hard, "You are a Devil."

"Now, you see," Mr. Bucket proceeds approvingly, "you're comfortable, and conducting yourself as I should expect a foreign young woman of your sense to do. So I'll give you a piece of advice, and it's this, Don't you talk too much. You're not expected to say anything here, and you can't keep too quiet a tongue in your head. In short, the less you Parlay, the better, you know." Mr. Bucket is very complacent over this French explanation.

Mademoiselle, with that tigerish expansion of the mouth, and her black eyes darting fire upon him, sits upright on the sofa in a rigid state, with her hands clenched—and her feet too, one might suppose—muttering, "O, you Bucket, you are a Devil!"

"Now, Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet," says Mr. Bucket, and from this time forth the finger never rests, "this young woman, my lodger, was her Ladyship's maid at the time I have mentioned to you; and this young woman, besides being extraordinary vehement and passionate against her Ladyship after being discharged——"

"Lie!" cries Mademoiselle. "I discharge myself."

"Now, why don't you take my advice?" returns Mr. Bucket, in an impressive, almost in an imploring tone. "I'm surprised at the indiscreetness you commit. You'll say something that'll be used against you, you know. You're sure to come to it. Never you mind what I say till it's given in evidence. It is not addressed to you."

"Discharge, too!" cries Mademoiselle, furiously, "by her Ladyship! Eh, my faith, a pretty Ladyship! Why, I r-r-r-ruin my character by remaining with a Ladyship so infame!"

"Upon my soul I wonder at you!" Mr. Bucket remonstrates. "I thought the French were a polite nation, I did, really. Yet to hear a female going on like that, before Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet!"

"He is a poor abused!" cries Mademoiselle. "I spit upon his house, upon his name, upon his imbecility," all of which she makes the carpet represent. "Oh, that he is a great man! O yes, superb! O Heaven! Bah!"

"Well, Sir Leicester Dedlock," proceeds Mr. Bucket, "this intemperate foreigner also angrily took it into her head that she had established a claim upon

Mr. Tulkinghorn, deceased, by attending on the occasion I told you of, at his chambers; though she was liberally paid for her time and trouble."

"Lie!" cries Mademoiselle. "I ref-use his money alltogezzer."

("If you *will* Parlay, you know," says Mr. Bucket, parenthetically, "you must take the consequences.) Now, whether she became my lodger, Sir Leicester Dedlock, with any deliberate intention then of doing this deed and blinding me, I give no opinion on; but she lived in my house, in that capacity, at the time that she was hovering about the chambers of the deceased Mr. Tulkinghorn with a view to a wrangle, and likewise persecuting and half frightening the life out of an unfortunate stationer."

"Lie!" cries Mademoiselle. "All lie!"

"The murder was committed, Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet, and you know under what circumstances. Now, I beg of you to follow me close with your attention for a minute or two. I was sent for, and the case was entrusted to me. I examined the place, and the body, and the papers, and everything. From information I received (from a clerk in the same house) I took George into custody, as having been seen hanging about there, on the night, and at very nigh the time, of the murder; also, as having been overheard in high words with the deceased on former occasions—even threatening him, as the witness made out. If you ask me, Sir Leicester Dedlock, whether from the first I believed George to be the murderer, I tell you candidly No; but he might be, notwithstanding; and there was enough against him to make it my duty to take him, and get him kept under remand. Now, observe!"

As Mr. Bucket bends forward in some excitement—for him—and inaugurates what he is going to say with one ghostly beat of his forefinger in the air, Mademoiselle Hortense fixes her black eyes upon him with a dark frown, and sets her dry lips closely and firmly together.

"I went home, Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet, at night, and found this young woman having supper with my wife, Mrs. Bucket. She had made a mighty show of being fond of Mrs. Bucket from her first offering herself as our lodger, but that night she made more than ever—in fact, overdid it. Likewise she overdid her respect, and all that, for the lamented memory of the deceased Mr. Tulkinghorn. By the living Lord it flashed upon me, as I sat opposite to her at the table and saw her with a knife in her hand, that she had done it!"

Mademoiselle is hardly audible, in straining through her teeth and lips the words "You are a Devil."

"Now where," pursues Mr. Bucket, "had she been on the night of the murder? She had been to the theayter. (She really was there, I have since found, both before the deed and after it.) I knew I had an artful customer to deal with, and that proof would be very difficult; and I laid a trap for her—such a trap as I never laid yet, and such a ventur as I never made yet. I worked it out in my mind while I was talking to her at supper. When I went up-stairs to bed, our house being small and this young woman's ears sharp, I stuffed the sheet into Mrs. Bucket's mouth that she shouldn't say a word of surprise, and told her all about it.—My dear, don't you give your mind to that again, or I shall link your feet together at the ankles." Mr. Bucket, breaking off, has made a noiseless descent upon Mademoiselle, and laid his heavy hand upon her shoulder.

"What is the matter with you now?" she asks him.

"Don't you think any more," returns Mr. Bucket, with admonitory finger, "of throwing yourself out of window. That's what's the matter with me. Come! Just take my arm. You needn't get up; I'll sit down by you. Now take my arm, will you? I'm a married man, you know; you've acquainted with my wife. Just take my arm."

Vainly endeavouring to moisten those dry lips, with a painful sound, she struggles with herself and complies.

"Now we're all right again. Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet, this case could never have been the case it is, but for Mrs. Bucket, who is a woman in fifty thousand—in a hundred and fifty thousand! To throw this young woman off her guard, I have never set foot in our house since; though I've communicated with Mrs. Bucket, in the baker's loaves and in the milk, as often as required. My whispered words to Mrs. Bucket, when she had the sheet in her mouth, were, 'My dear, can you throw her off continually with natural accounts of my suspicions against George, and this, and that, and t'other? Can you do without rest, and keep watch upon her, night and day? Can you undertake to say, She shall do nothing without my knowledge, she shall be my prisoner without suspecting it, she shall no more escape from me than from death, and her life shall be my life, and her soul my soul, till I have got her, if she did this murder?' Mrs. Bucket says to me, as well as she could speak, on account of the sheet, 'Bucket, I can!' And she has acted up to it glorious!"

"Lies!" Mademoiselle interposes. "All lies, my friend!"

"Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet, how did my calculations come out under these circumstances? When I calculated that this impetuous young woman would overdo it in new directions, was I wrong or right? I was right. What does she try to do? Don't let it give you a turn? To throw the murder on her Ladyship."

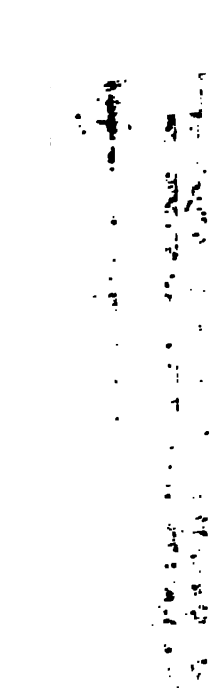
Sir Leicester rises from his chair, and staggers down again.

"And she got encouragement in it from hearing that I was always here, which was done a' purpose. Now, open that pocket-book of mine, Sir Leicester Dedlock, if I may take the liberty of throwing it towards you, and look at the letters sent to me, each with the two words, LADY DEDLOCK, in it. Open the one directed to yourself, which I stopped this very morning, and read the three words, LADY DEDLOCK, MURDERESS, in it. These letters have been falling about like a shower of lady-birds. What do you say now to Mrs. Bucket, from her spy-place, having seen them all written by this young woman? What do you say to Mrs. Bucket having, within this half-hour, secured the corresponding ink and paper, fellow half-sheets and what not? What do you say to Mrs. Bucket having watched the posting of 'em every one by this young woman, Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet?" Mr. Bucket asks, triumphant in his admiration of his lady's genius.

Two things are especially observable, as Mr. Bucket proceeds to a conclusion. First, that he seems imperceptibly to establish a dreadful right of property in Mademoiselle. Secondly, that the very atmosphere she breathes seems to narrow and contract about her, as if a close net, or a pall, were being drawn nearer and yet nearer around her breathless figure.

"There is no doubt that her Ladyship was on the spot at the eventful period," says Mr. Bucket; "and my foreign friend here saw her, I believe, from the upper part of the staircase. Her Ladyship and George and my foreign friend were all pretty close on one another's heels. But that don't signify any more, so I'll not go into it. I found the wadding of the pistol with which the deceased Mr. Tulkinghorn was shot. It was a bit of the printed description of your house at Chesney Wold. Not much in that, you'll say, Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet. No. But when my foreign friend here is so thoroughly off her guard as to think it a safe time to tear up the rest of that leaf, and when Mrs. Bucket puts the pieces together and finds the wadding wanting, it begins to look like Queer Street."

"These are very long lies," Mademoiselle interposes. "You prose great deal. Is it that you have almost all finished, or are you speaking always?"



looking—why, Lord! a mar
it was so unpleasant and inc
of which she was innocent,
What should I have lost? S
weapon. My prisoner here
funeral, that they should go,
at a very decent house of ent
there's a piece of water. At
kercher from the bedroom w
gone, and came back a little o
reported to me by Mrs. Buck
had the piece of water dragge
and the pocket-pistol was brou
Now, my dear, put your arm a
sha'n't hurt you!"

In a trice Mr. Bucket snaps
Bucket. "Now the other, darl

He rises; she rises too. "
until their drooping lids almost
false, your treacherous and curse

"She's gone forrard to the
her there, my dear."

"I would like to kiss her!" s
like.

"You'd bite her, I suspect,"

"I would!" making her eyes
limb."

"Bless you, darling," says
fully prepared to hear that. Y
one another, when you do differ.

"No. Though you

t be so malicious," says Mr. Bucket.
haughty gentleman of *Him?*" cries Mademoiselle, referring to Sir
with ineffable disdain. "Eh! O then regard him! The poor infant!
ha!"
e, come, why this is worse Parlaying than the other," says Mr. Bucket.
long!"
cannot do these things? Then you can do as you please with me. It
death, it is all the same. Let us go, my angel. Adieu you old man,
pity you, and I des-pise you!"
hese last words, she snaps her teeth together, as if her mouth closed with
It is impossible to describe how Mr. Bucket gets her out, but he
hes that feat in a manner so peculiar to himself; enfolding and pervading
cloud, and hovering away with her as if he were a homely Jupiter, and
bject of his affections.
icester, left alone, remains in the same attitude as though he were still
and his attention were still occupied. At length he gazes round the
om, and finding it deserted, rises unsteadily to his feet, pushes back his
d walks a few steps, supporting himself by the table. Then he stops;
more of those inarticulate sounds, lifts up his eyes and seems to stare at
g.
n knows what he sees. The green, green woods of Chesney Wold, the
use, the pictures of his forefathers, strangers defacing them, officers of
arsely handling his most precious heir-looms, thousands of fingers point-
o, thousands of faces sneering at him. But if such shadows flit before
s bewilderment, there is one other shadow which he can name with
g like distinctness even yet, and to which alone he addresses his tearing
ite hair, and his extended arms.
e, in association with whom, saving that she has been for years a main
he root of his dignity and pride, he has never had a selfish thought. It is
n he has loved, admired, honoured, and set up for the world to respect,
who, at the core of all the constrained formalities and conventionalities of
as been a stock of living tenderness and love, susceptible as nothing else is
struck with the agony he feels. He sees her, almost to the exclusion of
and cannot bear to look upon her cast down from the high place she has
well.
ven to the point of his sinking on the ground, oblivious of his suffering,
t pronounce her name with something like distinctness in the midst of
rusive sounds, and in a tone of mourning and compassion rather than

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CHAPTER LV.

FLIGHT.

R BUCKET of the Detective has not yet struck his great blow, as just
nicled, but is yet refreshing himself with sleep preparatory to his field-
n, through the night and along the freezing wintry roads, a chaise and
s out of Lincolnshire, making its way towards London.
ads shall soon traverse all this country, and with a rattle and a glare the
d train shall shoot like a meteor over the wide night-landscape, turning
paler; but, as yet, such things are non-existent in these parts, though

primitive sort of perch more in accorda
Mrs. Rouncewell is too thoughtful of
The old lady cannot make enough of th
holding her hand, and, regardless of its
are a mother, my dear soul," says s
George's mother!"

"Why, George," returns Mrs. Bagne
when he said at our house to my Wool
could have to think of when he grew to
he had never brought a sorrowful line
her head grey, then I felt sure, from hi
his own mother into his mind. I had of
that he had behaved bad to her."

"Never, my dear!" returns Mrs.
blessing on him, never! He was always
George! But he had a bold spirit, and h
And I know he waited at first, in letting
to be an officer; and when he didn't ris
us, and wouldn't be a disgrace to us. F
always from a baby!"

The old lady's hands stray about her as
what a likely lad, what a fine lad, what a
how they all took to him, down at Chesn
when he was a young gentleman; how th
who had been angry with him, forgave hi
And now to see him after all, and in a
heaves, and the quaint upright old-fashio
tionate distress.

Mrs. Bagnet, with the instinctive skill
housekeeper to her emotions for a little
her hand across her own

ave my thoughts as I have often had before, and I draw it out of George how he omes to have such things on him that afternoon. Then George tells me that he as seen by chance, at the lawyer's office, a fine old lady that has brought his nother plain before him; and he runs on about that old lady till he quite forgets himself, and paints her picture to me as she used to be, years upon years back. So I says to George when he has done, who is this old lady he has seen? And George tells me it's Mrs. Rouncewell, housekeeper for more than half a century to the Dedlock family down at Chesney Wold in Lincolnshire. George has frequently told me before that he's a Lincolnshire man, and I says to my old Lignum that night, 'Lignum, that's his mother for five-and-for-ty pound!'"

All this Mrs. Bagnet now relates for the twentieth time at least within the last four hours. Trilling it out, like a kind of bird; with a pretty high note, that it may be audible to the old lady above the hum of the wheels.

"Bless you, and thank you," says Mrs. Rouncewell. "Bless you, and thank you, my worthy soul!"

"Dear heart!" cries Mrs. Bagnet, in the most natural manner. "No thanks to me, I am sure. Thanks to yourself, ma'am, for being so ready to pay 'em! And mind once more, ma'am, what you had best do on finding George to be your own son, is, to make him—for your sake—have every sort of help to put himself in the right, and clear himself of a charge of which he is as innocent as you or me. It won't do to have truth and justice on his side; he must have law and lawyers," exclaims the old girl, apparently persuaded that the latter form a separate establishment, and have dissolved partnership with truth and justice for ever and a day.

"He shall have," says Mrs. Rouncewell, "all the help that can be got for him in the world, my dear. I will spend all I have, and thankfully, to procure it. Sir Leicester will do his best, the whole family will do their best. I—I know something, my dear; and will make my own appeal, as his mother parted from him all these years, and finding him in a jail at last."

The extreme disquietude of the old housekeeper's manner in saying this, her broken words, and her wringing of her hands, make a powerful impression on Mrs. Bagnet, and would astonish her but that she refers them all to her sorrow for her son's condition. And yet Mrs. Bagnet wonders, too, why Mrs. Rouncewell should murmur so distractedly, "My Lady, my Lady, my Lady!" over and over again.

The frosty night wears away, and the dawn breaks, and the post-chaise comes rolling on through the early mist, like the ghost of a chaise departed. It has plenty of spectral company, in ghosts of trees and hedges, slowly vanishing and giving place to the realities of day. London reached, the travellers alight: the old housekeeper in great tribulation and confusion; Mrs. Bagnet, quite fresh and collected!—as she would be, if her next point, with no new equipage and outfit, were the Cape of Good Hope, the Island of Ascension, Hong Kong, or any other military station.

But when they set out for the prison where the trooper is confined, the old lady has managed to draw about her, with her lavender-coloured dress, much of the staid calmness which is its usual accompaniment. A wonderfully grave, precise, and handsome piece of old china she looks; though her heart beats fast, and her bosom is ruffled, more than even the remembrance of this wayward son has ruffled it these many years.

Approaching the cell, they find the door opening and a warder in the act of coming out. The old girl promptly makes a sign of entreaty to him to say nothing; assenting, with a nod, he suffers them to enter as he shuts the door.

So George, who is writing at his table, supposing himself to be alone, does not raise his eyes, but remains absorbed. The old housekeeper looks at him, and those wandering hands *of hers are quite* enough for Mrs. Bagnet's conformation; even

"George Rouncewell! O my dear
The trooper starts up, clasps his mo
knees before her. Whether in a late
that comes back upon him, he puts his
its prayers, and raising them towards h
"My George, my dearest son! A
where have you been these cruel years
such a fine strong man. Grown so like
he was alive!"
She can ask, and he can answer, not
the old girl, turned away, leans one
honest forehead upon it, wipes her eyes
enjoys herself like the best of old girls
"Mother," says the trooper, when the
all, for I know my need of it."
Forgive him! She does it with all he
it. She tells him how she has had it
that he was her beloved son George.
never. If she had died without this ha
and can't look to live very long—she wo
if she had had her senses, as her belove
"Mother, I have been an undutiful tr
of late years I have had a kind of glimm
left home I didn't care much, mother—I
and went away and 'listed, harum-scarun
nobody, no not I, and that nobody cared
The trooper has dried his eyes, and pu
extraordinary contrast between his hab
carrying himself, and the softened tone
ally by a half-stifled sob.
"So I wrote a line home, mother, as
under another name, and I

my brother, as I read in chance north-country papers now and then, prosperous and famous. There was I a dragoon, roving, unsettled, e like him, but self-unmade—all my earlier advantages thrown away, learning unlearnt, nothing picked up but what unfitted me for most could think of. What business had *I* to make myself known? After at time go by me, what good could come of it? The worst was past other. I knew by that time (being a man) how you had mourned for me, me, and prayed for me; and the pain was over, or was softened was better in your mind as it was."

dy sorrowfully shakes her head; and taking one of his powerful hands, gly upon her shoulder.

n't say that it was so, mother, but that I made it out to be so. I said t good could come of it? Well, my dear mother, some good might f it to myself—and there was the meanness of it. You would have ut; you would have purchased my discharge; you would have taken Chesney Wold; you would have brought me and my brother and my nily together; you would all have considered anxiously how to do r me, and set me up as a respectable civilian. But how could any of of me, when I couldn't so much as feel sure of myself? How could arding as an incumbrance and a discredit to you, an idle dragooning as an incumbrance and a discredit to himself, excepting under dis- ow could I look my brother's children in the face, and pretend to set mple—I, the vagabond boy, who had run away from home, and been l unhappiness of my mother's life? 'No, George.' Such were my er, when I passed this in review before me: 'You have made your lie upon it.'"

ocewell, drawing up her stately form, shakes her head at the old girl ing pride upon her, as much as to say, "I told you so!" The eves her feelings, and testifies her interest in the conversation, by rooper a great poke between the shoulders with her umbrella; this fterwards repeats, at intervals, in a species of affectionate lunacy: after the administration of each of these remonstrances, to resort to wall and the grey cloak again.

s the way I brought myself to think, mother, that my best amends was hat bed I had made, and die upon it. And I should have done it ve been to see you more than once down at Chesney Wold, when you t of me), but for my old comrade's wife here, who I find has been me. But I thank her for it. I thank you for it, Mrs. Bagnet, with and might."

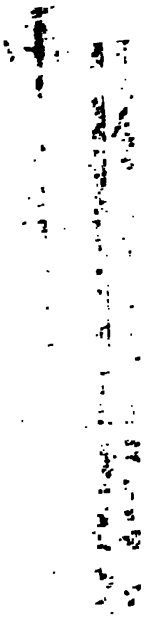
Mrs. Bagnet responds with two pokes.

the old lady impresses upon her son George, her own dear recovered and pride, the light of her eyes, the happy close of her life, and ame she can think of, that he must be governed by the best advice y money and influence; that he must yield up his case to the yers that can be got; that he must act, in this serious plight, as he ised to act; and must not be self-willed, however right, but must hink only of his poor old mother's anxiety and suffering until he is he will break her heart.

'tis little enough to consent to," returns the trooper, stopping her "tell me what I shall do, and I'll make a late beginning, and do it. , you'll take care of my mother, I know?"

rd poke from the old girl's umbrella.

bring her acquainted with Mr. Jarndyce and Miss Summerson, she



himself while I've been so
to see him in this place a
expected to have any plea
my secret from him, mothe
my secret from my brother,

"But not always, dear G

"Why, mother, perhaps
too—but keep it now, I do
a brother has turned up, I
doubtfully, "to break it my
by the way in which he seen

As he evidently has a ro
recognised in Mrs. Bagnet's
asks. For this he thanks her

"In all other respects, my
can wish; on this one alone,
yers. I have been drawing u
account of what I knew of t
unfortunate affair. It's ente
word in it but what's wanted
end, whensoever I was called
be let to do it still; but I hav
ever is said or done, I give m

Matters being brought to t
wane, Mrs. Bagnet proposes
upon her son's neck, and ag
chest.

"Where are you going to t

"I am going to the town h
ness there, that must be look

"Will

old girl shakes hands and trudges off; arriving soon afterwards in the bosom of the Bagnet family, and falling to washing the greens, as if nothing had happened.

My Lady is in that room in which she held her last conference with the murdered man, and is sitting where she sat that night, and is looking at the spot where he stood upon the hearth, studying her so leisurely, when a tap comes at the door. Who is it? Mrs. Rouncewell. What has brought Mrs. Rouncewell to town so unexpectedly?

"Trouble, my Lady. Sad trouble. O, my Lady, may I beg a word with you?"

What new occurrence is it that makes this tranquil old woman tremble so? Far happier than her Lady, as her Lady has often thought, why does she falter in this manner, and look at her with such strange mistrust?

"What is the matter? Sit down and take your breath."

"O, my Lady, my Lady. I have found my son—my youngest, who went away for a soldier so long ago. And he is in prison."

"For debt?"

"O no, my Lady; I would have paid any debt, and joyful."

"For what is he in prison then?"

"Charged with a murder, my Lady, of which he is as innocent as—as I am. Accused of the murder of Mr. Tulkinghorn."

What does she mean by this look and this imploring gesture? Why does she come so close? What is the letter that she holds?

"Lady Dedlock, my dear Lady, my good Lady, my kind Lady! You must have a heart to feel for me, you must have a heart to forgive me. I was in this family before you were born. I am devoted to it. But think of my dear son wrongfully accused."

"I do not accuse him."

"No, my Lady, no. But others do, and he is in prison and in danger. O Lady Dedlock, if you can say but a word to help to clear him, say it!"

What delusion can this be? What power does she suppose is in the person she petitions, to avert this unjust suspicion, if it be unjust? Her Lady's handsome eyes regard her with astonishment, almost with fear.

"My Lady, I came away last night from Chesney Wold to find my son in my old age, and the step upon the Ghost's Walk was so constant and so solemn that I never heard the like in all these years. Night after night, as it has fallen dark, the sound has echoed through your rooms, but last night it was awfullest. And as it fell dark last night, my Lady, I got this letter."

"What letter is it?"

"Hush! Hush!" The housekeeper looks round, and answers in a frightened whisper: "My Lady, I have not breathed a word of it, I don't believe what's written in it, I know it can't be true, I am sure and certain that it is not true. But my son is in danger, and you must have a heart to pity me. If you know of anything that is not known to others, if you have any suspicion, if you have any clue at all, and any reason for keeping it in your own breast, O my dear Lady, think of me, and conquer that reason, and let it be known! This is the most I consider possible. I know you are not a hard lady, but you go your own way always without help, and you are not familiar with your friends; and all who admire you—and all do—as a beautiful and elegant lady, know you to be one far away from themselves, who can't be approached close. My Lady, you may have some proud or angry reasons for disdaining to utter something that you know; if so, pray, O pray, think of a faithful servant whose whole life has been passed in this family which she dearly loves, and relent, and help to clear my son! My Lady, my good Lady," the old housekeeper pleads with genuine simplicity, "I am so humble in my place, and you are by nature so high and distant, that you may not

the letter."

The old housekeeper leaves her
not a hard lady naturally; and the ti
able figure suing to her with such st
great compassion. But so long accus
reality; so long schooled for her own
shuts up the natural feelings of the h
uniform and dreary gloss over the goo
the sensible and the senseless; she ha

She opens the letter. Spread out t
discovery of the body, as it lay face
heart; and underneath is written her
tached.

It falls out of her hand. How lo
knows not; but it lies where it fell, wh
the young man of the name of Guppy,
several times, for they are ringing in h
them.

"Let him come in!"

He comes in. Holding the letter in
floor, she tries to collect her thoughts.
Lady Dedlock, holding the same prepa

"Your Ladyship may not be at first
has never been welcome to your Ladysh
bound to confess that there never has
things, why he should be; but I hope
ship, you will not find fault with me," s

"Do so."

"Thank your Ladyship. I ought fir
sits on the edge of a chair, and puts hi
Summerson, whose image, as I former
period of

"Nor can I," Mr. Guppy returns with a sense of injury upon him, "too particularly request your Ladyship to take particular notice that it's no personal affair of mine that brings me here. I have no interested views of my own to serve in coming here. If it was not for my promise to Miss Summerson, and my keeping of it sacred,—I, in point of fact, shouldn't have darkened these doors again, but should have seen 'em further first."

Mr. Guppy considers this a favourable moment for sticking up his hair with both hands.

"Your Ladyship will remember when I mention it, that the last time I was here, I run against a party very eminent in our profession, and whose loss we all deplore. That party certainly did from that time apply himself to cutting in against me in a way that I will call sharp practice, and did make it, at every turn and point, extremely difficult for me to be sure that I hadn't inadvertently led up to something contrary to Miss Summerson's wishes. Self-praise is no recommendation; but I may say for myself that I am not so bad a man of business neither."

Lady Dedlock looks at him in stern inquiry. Mr. Guppy immediately withdraws his eyes from her face, and looks anywhere else.

"Indeed, it has been made so hard," he goes on, "to have any idea what that party was up to in combination with others, that until the loss which we all deplore, I was gravelled—an expression which your Ladyship, moving in the higher circles, will be so good as to consider tantamount to knocked over. Small likewise—a name by which I refer to another party, a friend of mine that your Ladyship is not acquainted with—got to be so close and double-faced that at times it wasn't easy to keep one's hands off his ed. However, what with the exertion of my humble abilities, and what with the help of a mutual friend by the name of Mr. Tony Weevle (who is of a high aristocratic turn, and has your Ladyship's portrait always hanging up in his room), I have now reasons for an apprehension, as to which I come to put your Ladyship upon your guard. First, will your Ladyship allow me to ask you whether you have had any strange visitors this morning? I don't mean fashionable visitors, but such visitors, for instance, as Miss Barbary's old servant, or as a person without the use of his lower extremities, carried up-stairs similarly to a Guy?"

"No!"

"Then I assure your Ladyship that such visitors have been here, and have been received here. Because I saw them at the door, and waited at the corner of the square till they came out, and took half-an-hour's turn afterwards to avoid them."

"What have I to do with that, or what have you? I do not understand you. What do you mean?"

"Your Ladyship, I come to put you on your guard. There may be no occasion for it. Very well. Then I have only done my best to keep my promise to Miss Summerson. I strongly suspect (from what Small has dropped, and from what we have corkscrewed out of him) that those letters I was to have brought to your Ladyship were not destroyed when I supposed they were. That if there was anything to be blown upon, it *is* blown upon. That the visitors I have alluded to have been here this morning to make money of it. And that the money is made, or making."

Mr. Guppy picks up his hat and rises.

"Your Ladyship, you know best, whether there's anything in what I say, or whether there's nothing. Something or nothing, I have acted up to Miss Summerson's wishes in letting things alone, and in undoing what I had begun to do, as far as possible; that's sufficient for me. In case I should be taking a liberty in putting your Ladyship on your guard when there's no necessity for it,

thinks about it—and in add
unforeseen by him, she is de
her enemy.

Her enemy he was, and s
enemy he is, even in his grav
a new torment at his lifeless h
at his door that night, and hov
girl away, so soon before, mere
as if the hangman's hands wer

She has thrown herself upon
and her face buried in the cushi
flings herself down again, and
is unutterable. If she really v
moment, more intense.

For, as her murderous perspec
the precautions for its commissio
tation of the hateful figure, preve
it; and as those consequences we
moment the figure was laid low—
so, now she sees that when he us
to think, "if some mortal stroke
from my way!" it was but wishin
be flung to the winds, and chance
relief she has felt in his death. V
arch removed, and now the arc
crushing and mangling piecemeal

Thus, a terrible impression ste
suer, living or dead—obdurate a
bered shape, or not more obdurat
no escape but in death. Hunted
dreadful remorse

able to forget the unworthy woman on whom you have wasted a most generous devotion—who avoids you, only with a deeper shame than that with which she hurries from herself—and who writes this last adieu?"

She veils and dresses quickly, leaves all her jewels and her money, listens, goes down-stairs at a moment when the hall is empty, opens and shuts the great door; flutters away, in the shrill frosty wind.

CHAPTER LVI.

PURSUIT.

IMPASSIVE, as behoves its high breeding, the Dedlock town house stares at the other houses in the street of dismal grandeur, and gives no outward sign of anything going wrong within. Carriages rattle, doors are battered at, the world exchanges calls; ancient charmers with skeleton throats, and peachy cheeks that have a rather ghastly bloom upon them seen by daylight, when indeed these fascinating creatures look like Death and the Lady fused together, dazzle the eyes of men. Forth from the frigid Mews come easily swinging carriages guided by short-legged coachmen in flaxen wigs, deep sunk into downy hammercloths; and up behind mount luscious Mercuries, bearing sticks of state, and wearing cocked hats broadwise: a spectacle for the Angels.

The Dedlock town house changes not externally, and hours pass before its exalted dulness is disturbed within. But Volumnia the fair, being subject to the prevalent complaint of boredom, and finding that disorder attacking her spirits with some virulence, ventures at length to repair to the library for change of scene. Her gentle tapping at the door producing no response, she opens it and peeps in; seeing no one there, takes possession.

The sprightly Dedlock is reputed, in that grass-grown city of the ancients, Bath, to be stimulated by an urgent curiosity, which impels her on all convenient and inconvenient occasions to sidle about with a golden glass at her eye, peering into objects of every description. Certain it is that she avails herself of the present opportunity of hovering over her kinsman's letters and papers, like a bird; taking a short peck at this document, and a blink with her head on one side at that document, and hopping about from table to table, with her glass at her eye in an inquisitive and restless manner. In the course of these researches, she stumbles over something; and turning her glass in that direction, sees her kinsman lying on the ground like a felled tree.

Volumnia's pet little scream acquires a considerable augmentation of reality from this surprise, and the house is quickly in commotion. Servants tear up and down stairs, bells are violently wrung, doctors are sent for, and Lady Dedlock is sought in all directions, but not found. Nobody has seen or heard her since she last rang her bell. Her letter to Sir Leicester is discovered on her table;—but it is doubtful yet whether he has not received another missive from another world, requiring to be personally answered; and all the living languages, and all the dead, are as one to him.

They lay him down upon his bed, and chafe, and rub, and fan, and put ice to his head, and try every means of restoration. Howbeit, the day has ebbed away, and it is night in his room, before his stertorous breathing lulls, or his fixed eyes show any consciousness of the candle that is occasionally passed before them. But when this change begins, it goes on; and by-and-by he nods, or moves his eyes, or even his hand, in token that he hears and comprehends.

they cannot at first understand him; it is his old housekeeper
he wants, and brings in a slate.

After pausing for some time, he slowly scrawls upon it, in a
"Chesney Wold?"

No, she tells him: he is in London. He was taken ill in t
ing. Right thankful she is that she happened to come to L
upon him.

"It is not an illness of any serious consequence, Sir Leic
much better to-morrow, Sir Leicester. All the gentlemen s
the tears coursing down her fair old face.

After making a survey of the room, and looking with pa
and the bed where the doctors stand, he writes, "My Lady.

"My Lady went out, Sir Leicester, before you were taken
of your illness yet."

He points again, in great agitation, at the two words. They
but he points again with increased agitation. On their looking
knowing what to say, he takes the slate once more, and write
God's sake, where?" And makes an imploring moan.

It is thought better that his old housekeeper should give h
letter, the contents of which no one knows or can surmise. S
and puts it out for his perusal. Having read it twice by a gr
writhes down so that it shall not be seen, and lies moaning. He pa
relapse, or into a swoon; and it is an hour before he opens hi
his faithful and attached old servant's arm. The doctors know
her; and, when not actively engaged about him, stand aloof.

The slate comes into requisition again; but the word he wa
not remember. His anxiety, his eagerness, and affliction at th
is dreadful. It seems as if he must go mad, in the necessity he
the inability under which he labours of expressing to do what,
He has written the letter B., and there stopped. Of a sudden,
observe, he puts Mr. before it. The old housekeeper sugge

his finger, while that eye is still glancing over the words, he indicates,
ter Dedlock, Baronet, I understand you."
ster writes upon the slate. "Full forgiveness. Find——" Mr. Bucket
nd.
cester Dedlock, Baronet, I'll find her. But my search after her must
it of hand. Not a minute must be lost."
quickness of thought, he follows Sir Leicester Dedlock's look towards
upon a table.
here, Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet? Certainly. Open it with one
e keys? Certainly. The littlest key? *To* be sure. Take the notes
will. Count 'em? That's soon done. Twenty and thirty 's fifty, and
venty, and fifty 's one twenty, and forty 's one sixty. Take 'em for
That I'll do, and render an account of course. Don't spare money?
."
ity and certainty of Mr. Bucket's interpretation on all these heads is
f miraculous. Mrs. Rouncewell, who holds the light, is giddy with
s of his eyes and hands, as he starts up, furnished for his journey.
George's mother, old lady; that's about what you are, I believe?"
cket, aside, with his hat already on, and buttoning his coat.
, I am his distressed mother."
ought, according to what he mentioned to me just now. Well, then,
something. You needn't be distressed no more. Your son 's all right.
you begin a-crying; because what you've got to do is to take care of
r Dedlock, Baronet, and you won't do that by crying. As to your son,
t, I tell you; and he sends his loving duty, and hoping you're the
s discharged honourable; that's about what *he* is; with no more impu-
s character than there is on yours, and yours is a tidy one, I'll bet a
u may trust me, for I took your son. He conducted himself in a game
n that occasion; and he's a fine-made man, and you're a fine-made old
u're a mother and son, the pair of you, as might be showed for models
. Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet, what you've trusted to me I'll go
h. Don't you be afraid of my turning out of my way, right or left; or
ep, or a wash, or a shave, till I have found what I go in search of. Say
s is kind and forgiving on your part? Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet,
d I wish you better, and these family affairs smoothed over—as, Lord!
family affairs equally has been, and equally will be, to the end of time."
peroration, Mr. Bucket, buttoned up, goes quietly out, looking steadily
as if he were already piercing the night, in quest of the fugitive.
step is to take himself to Lady Dedlock's rooms, and look all over them
ng indication that may help him. The rooms are in darkness now;
Mr. Bucket with a wax-light in his hand, holding it above his head,
a sharp mental inventory of the many delicate objects so curiously at
th himself, would be to see a sight—which nobody *does* see, as he is
lock himself in.
boudoir this," says Mr. Bucket, who feels in a manner furbished up
h by the blow of the morning. "Must have cost a sight of money.
s to cut away from, these; she must have been hard put to it!"
and shutting table-drawers, and looking into caskets and jewel-cases,
reflection of himself in various mirrors, and moralises thereon.
ight suppose I was a-moving in the fashionable circles, and getting
r Almack's," says Mr. Bucket. "I begin to think I must be a swell
ds, without knowing it."
ing about, he has opened a dainty little chest in an inner drawer. Wo

great hand, tu ng over some gloves which it can scarcely feel, they are s
and soft within t, comes upon a white handkerchief.

"Hum! L 's have a look at *you*," says Mr. Bucket, putting down th
"What should *you* be kept by yourself for? What's *your* motive? Are
Ladyship's property, or somebody else's? You've got a mark upon you,
wheres or anot r, I suppose?"

He finds it a he speaks, "Esther Summerson."

"Oh!" says Mr. Bucket, pausing, with his finger at his ear, "Come,
you."

He complete his observations as quietly and carefully as he has carried t
leaves everythi g else precisely as he found it, glides away after some five
in all, and pass nce upward at the dimly lighted
of Sir Leicest ing, to the nearest couch-stand,
the horse for e driven to the Shooting Galle
Bucket does " udge of horses; but he lays out
money on th , and generally sums up his kn
of the subje sees a horse as can go, he know
His know sent instance. Clattering over th
at a danger inging his keen eyes to bear
slinking creat nidnight streets, and even on th
in upper wind whe or gone to bed, and on all the
that he rattles sky, and on the earth where the s
thin—for something may present itself to assist him, anywhere—he dashes
destination at such a speed, that when he stops, the horse half smothers h
cloud of steam.

"Unbear him half a moment to freshen him up, and I'll be back."

He runs up the long wooden entry, and finds the trooper smoking his pi

"I thought I should, George, after what you have gone through, my
haven't a word to spare. Now, honour! All to save a woman. Miss Sum
that was here when Gridley died—that was the name, I know—all right!—
does she live?"

The trooper has just come from there, and gives him the address near
Street.

"You won't repent it, George. Good night!"

He is off again, with an impression of having seen Phil sitting by the fro
staring at him open-mouthed; and gallops away again, and gets out in a
of steam again.

Mr. Jarndyce, the only person up in the house, is just going to bed; ris
his book, on hearing the rapid ringing at the bell; and comes down to t
in his dressing-gown.

"Don't be alarmed, sir." In a moment his visitor is confidential with
the hall, has shut the door, and stands with his hand upon the lock. "I
the pleasure of seeing you before. Inspector Bucket. Look at that handk
sir, Miss Esther Summerson's. Found it myself put away in a drawer o
Dedlock's, quarter of an hour ago. Not a moment to lose. Matter of life or
You know Lady Dedlock?"

"Yes."

"There has been a discovery there, to-day. Family affairs have come o
Leicester Dedlock, Baronet, has had a fit—apoplexy or paralysis—and coul
brought to, and precious time has been lost. Lady Dedlock disappeare
afternoon, and left a letter for him that looks bad. Run your eye over it.
it is!"

Mr. Jarndyce having read it, asks him what he thinks?

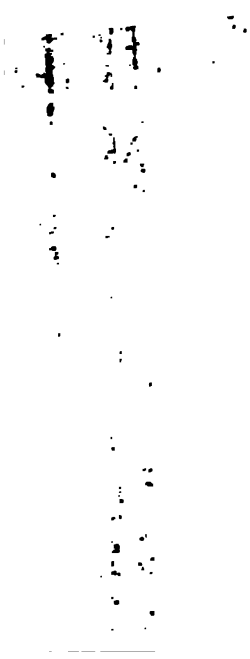
know. It looks like suicide. Anyways, there's more and more danger, te, of its drawing to that. I'd give a hundred pound an hour to have got the present time. Now, Mr. Jarndyce, I am employed by Sir Leicester Baronet, to follow her and find her—to save her, and take her his forgive- ve money and full power, but I want something else. I want Miss a."

dyce, in a troubled voice, repeats "Miss Summerson?"

Mr. Jarndyce;" Mr. Bucket has read his face with the greatest attention "I speak to you as a gentleman of a humane heart, and under such rcumstances as don't often happen. If ever delay was dangerous, it's now; and if ever you couldn't afterwards forgive yourself for causing e time. Eight or ten hours, worth, as I tell you, a hundred pound east, have been lost since Lady Dedlock disappeared. I am charged to I am Inspector Bucket. Besides all the rest that's heavy on her, she er, as she believes, suspicion of murder. If I follow her alone, she, being e of what Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet, has communicated to me, ven to desperation. But if I follow her in company with a young lady, to the description of a young lady that she has a tenderness for—I ask n, and I say no more than that—she will give me credit for being Let me come up with her, and be able to have the hold upon her of young lady for'ard, and I'll save her and prevail with her if she is alive. e up with her alone—a hard matter—and I'll do my best; but I don't what the best may be. Time flies; it's getting on for one o'clock. strikes, there's another hour gone; and it's worth a thousand pound d of a hundred."

ll true, and the pressing nature of the case cannot be questioned. Mr. egs him to remain there, while he speaks to Miss Summerson. Mr. e he will; but acting on his usual principle, does no such thing—follow- s instead, and keeping his man in sight. So he remains, dodging and ut in the gloom of the staircase while they confer. In a very little time, ce comes down, and tells him that Miss Summerson will join him di- place herself under his protection, to accompany him where he pleases. , satisfied, expresses high approval; and awaits her coming at the door. e mounts a high tower in his mind, and looks out far and wide. Many res he perceives, creeping through the streets; many solitary figures hs, and roads, and lying under haystacks. But the figure that he seeks g them. Other solitaries he perceives, in nooks of bridges, looking in shadowed places down by the river's level; and a dark, dark, shape- drifting with the tide, more solitary than all, clings with a drowning attention.

she? Living or dead, where is she? If, as he folds the handkerchief ly puts it up, it were able, with an enchanted power, to bring before ce where she found it, and the night landscape near the cottage where it little child, would he descry her there? On the waste, where the are burning with a pale blue flare; where the straw-roofs of the nts in which the bricks are made, are being scattered by the wind; day and water are hard frozen, and the mill in which the gaunt blind round all day, looks like an instrument of human torture;—traversing d blighted spot, there is a lonely figure with the sad world to itself, e snow and driven by the wind, and cast out, it would seem, from all hip. It is the figure of a woman, too; but it is miserably dressed, clothes ever came through the hall, and out at the great door, of the nsion.



entreaties might prevail upon h
I made out; but I was thrown
that, in spite of every effort I c
to myself, fully to recover my ri

But I dressed and wrapped
one; and went down to Mr. J
secret. In taking me to him my
was that he had come to think o
my guardian's candle, read to m
upon her table; and, I suppose
was sitting beside him, rolling sw

His manner was very keen, an
great deal might depend on my
questions that he wished to ask m
communication with my mother
when and where I had spoken wit
of my handkerchief. When I ha
particularly to consider—taking ti
there was any one, no matter wher
under circumstances of the last
guardian. But, by-and-by, I men
as connected with his old chivalro
and with what my guardian had in
his unconscious connexion with h

My companion had stopped th
we might the better hear each oth
to me, after considering within hi
his mind how to proceed. He w
but I did not feel clear enough to

We had not driven very far from
at a public-h[illegible]

The second officer, who had attended to it closely, then copied it out, and called in another man in uniform (there were several in an outer room) who took it up and went away with it. All this was done with the greatest despatch, and without the waste of a moment; yet nobody was at all hurried. As soon as the paper was sent out upon its travels, the two officers resumed their former quiet work of writing with neatness and care. Mr. Bucket thoughtfully came and warmed the soles of his boots, first one and then the other, at the fire.

"Are you well wrapped up, Miss Summerson?" he asked me, as his eyes met mine. "It's a desperate sharp night for a young lady to be out in."

I told him I cared for no weather, and was warmly clothed.

"It may be a long job," he observed; "but so that it ends well, never mind, miss."

"I pray to Heaven it may end well!" said I.

He nodded comfortingly. "You see, whatever you do, don't you go and fret yourself. You keep yourself cool, and equal for anything that may happen; and it'll be the better for you, the better for me, the better for Lady Dedlock, and the better for Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet."

He was really very kind and gentle; and as he stood before the fire warming his boots, and rubbing his face with his forefinger, I felt a confidence in his sagacity which re-assured me. It was not yet a quarter to two, when I heard horses' feet and wheels outside. "Now, Miss Summerson," said he, "we are off, if you please!"

He gave me his arm, and the two officers courteously bowed me out, and we found at the door a phaeton or barouche, with a postilion and post horses. Mr. Bucket handed me in, and took his own seat on the box. The man in uniform whom he had sent to fetch this equipage, then handed him up a dark lantern at his request; and when he had given a few directions to the driver, we rattled away.

I was far from sure that I was not in a dream. We rattled with great rapidity through such a labyrinth of streets, that I soon lost all idea where we were; except that we had crossed and re-crossed the river, and still seemed to be traversing a low-lying, water-side, dense neighbourhood of narrow thoroughfares, chequered by docks and basins, high piles of warehouses, swing-bridges, and masts of ships. At length we stopped at the corner of a little slimy turning, which the wind from the river, rushing up it, did not purify; and I saw my companion, by the light of his lantern, in conference with several men, who looked like a mixture of police and sailors. Against the mouldering wall by which they stood, there was a bill, on which I could discern the words, "FOUND DROWNED;" and this, and an inscription about Drags, possessed me with the awful suspicion shadowed forth in our visit to that place.

I had no need to remind myself that I was not there, by the indulgence of any feeling of mine, to increase the difficulties of the search, or to lessen its hopes, or enhance its delays. I remained quiet; but what I suffered in that dreadful spot I never can forget. And still it was like the horror of a dream. A man yet dark and muddy, in long swollen sodden boots and a hat like them, was called out of a boat, and whispered with Mr. Bucket, who went away with him down some slippery steps—as if to look at something secret that he had to show. They came back, wiping their hands upon their coats, after turning over something wet; but thank God it was not what I feared!

After some further conference, Mr. Bucket (whom everybody seemed to know and defer to) went in with the others at a door, and left me in the carriage; while the driver walked up and down by his horses, to warm himself. The tide was coming in, as I judged from the sound it made; and I could hear it break at the

character of the streets. We crossed the river again. Du search, my companion, wrapp single moment; but, when w more on the alert than before. and went back after a shadow into the profound black pit of me. The river had a fearful l between the low flat lines of s both of substance and shadow: times since then, by sunlight an sions of that journey. In my burning dim; the cutting wind pass; the monotonous wheels ar reflected back, looks palely in up

Clattering and clattering throu pavement on to dark smooth r After a while, I recognised the horses were ready for us, and we and the open country was white w

"An old acquaintance of yours cheerfully.

"Yes," I returned. "Have y

"None that can be quite depe times as yet."

He had gone into every late or were not a few at that time, the r had got down to talk to the turnp and chinking money, and makin whenever he took his seat upon t look, and he always said to "

"Passed through here on foot, this evening, about eight or nine. I heard of her first at the archway toll, over at Highgate, but couldn't make quite sure. Traced her all along, on and off. Picked her up at one place, and dropped her at another; but she's before us now, safe. Take hold of this cup and saucer, Ostler. Now, if you wasn't brought up to the butter trade, look out and see if you can catch half-a-crown in your t'other hand. One, two, three, and there you are! Now, my lad, try a gallop!"

We were soon in Saint Albans, and alighted a little before day, when I was just beginning to arrange and comprehend the occurrences of the night, and really to believe that they were not a dream. Leaving the carriage at the posting-house and ordering fresh horses to be ready, my companion gave me his arm, and we went towards home.

"As this is your regular abode, Miss Summerson, you see," he observed, "I should like to know whether you've been asked for by any stranger answering the description, or whether Mr. Jarndyce has. I don't much expect it, but it might be."

As we ascended the hill, he looked about him with a sharp eye—the day was now breaking—and reminded me that I had come down it one night, as I had reason for remembering, with my little servant and poor Jo: whom he called Toughey.

I wondered how he knew that.

"When you passed a man upon the road, just yonder, you know," said Mr. Bucket.

Yes, I remembered that too, very well.

"That was me," said Mr. Bucket.

Seeing my surprise, he went on:

"I drove down in a gig that afternoon, to look after that boy. You might have heard my wheels when you came out to look after him yourself, for I was aware of you and your little maid going up, when I was walking the horse down. Making an inquiry or two about him in the town, I soon heard what company he was in; and was coming among the brick-fields to look for him, when I observed you bringing him home here."

"Had he committed any crime?" I asked.

"None was charged against him," said Mr. Bucket, coolly lifting off his hat; "but I suppose he wasn't over-particular. No. What I wanted him for, was in connexion with keeping this very matter of Lady Dedlock quiet. He had been making his tongue more free than welcome, as to a small accidental service he had been paid for by the deceased Mr. Tulkinghorn; and it wouldn't do, at any sort of price, to have him playing those games. So having warned him out of London, I made an afternoon of it to warn him to keep out of it now he *was* away, and go farther from it, and maintain a bright look out that I didn't catch him coming back again."

"Poor creature!" said I.

"Poor enough," assented Mr. Bucket, "and trouble enough, and well enough away from London, or anywhere else. I was regularly turned on my back when I found him taken up by your establishment, I do assure you."

I asked him why? "Why, my dear?" said Mr. Bucket. "Naturally there was no end to his tongue then. He might as well have been born with a yard and a half of it, and a remnant over."

Although I remember this conversation now, my head was in confusion at the time, and my power of attention hardly did more than enable me to understand that he entered into these particulars to divert me. With the same kind intention, manifestly, he often spoke to me of indifferent things, while his face was busy with the one object that we had in view. He still pursued this subject, as we turned in at the garden-gate.

"Ah!" said Mr. Bucket. "Here we are, and a nice retired place it is. Puts a man in mind of the country house in the Woodpecker-tapping, that was known by the smoke which so gracefully curled. They're early with the kitchen fire, and that denotes good servants. But what you've always got to be careful of with servants, is, who comes to see 'em; you never know what they're up to, if you don't know that. And another thing, my dear. Whenever you find a young man behind the kitchen-door, you give that young man in charge on suspicion of being secreted in a dwelling-house with an unlawful purpose."

We were now in front of the house; he looked attentively and closely at the gravel for footprints, before he raised his eyes to the windows.

"Do you generall gentleman in the same room, when he's on a visit here, quired, glancing at Mr. Skimpole's usual chamber,

"You know Mr. S

"What do you c Ir. Bucket, bending down his ear. "Skimpole, is it? t his name might be. Skimpole. Not John. I shoul

"Harold," I told

"Harold. Yes. old," said Mr. Bucket, eyeing me with great expressio..

"He is a singular

"No idea of money, observed Mr. Bucket.—"He takes it though!"

I involuntarily returned for answer, that I perceived Mr. Bucket knew him.

"Why, now I'll tell you, Miss Summerson," he rejoined. "Your mind will be all the better for not running on one point too continually, and I'll tell you for a change. It was him as pointed out to me where Toughey was. I made up my mind, that night, to come to the door and ask for Toughey, if that was all; but willing to try a move or so first, if any such was on the board, I just pitched up a morsel of gravel at that window where I saw a shadow. As soon as Harold opens it and I have had a look at him, thinks I, you're the man for me. So I smoothes him down a bit, about not wanting to disturb the family after they was gone to bed, and about its being a thing to be regretted that charitable young ladies should harbour vagrants; and then, when I pretty well understood his ways, I said, I should consider a fypunnote well bestowed if I could relieve the premises of Toughey without causing any noise or trouble. Then says he, lifting up his eyebrows in the gayest way, 'it's no use mentioning a fypunnote to me, my friend, because I'm a mere child in such matters, and have no idea of money.' Of course I understood what his taking it so easy meant; and being now quite sure he was the man for me, I wrapped the note round a little stone and threw it up to him. Well! He laughs and beams, and looks as innocent as you like, and says, 'But I don't know the value of these things. What am I to *do* with this?' 'Spend it, sir,' says I. 'But I shall be taken in,' he says, 'they won't give me the right change, I shall lose it, it's no use to me.' Lord, you never saw such a face as he carried it with! Of course he told me where to find Toughey, and I found him."

I regarded this as very treacherous on the part of Mr. Skimpole towards my guardian, and as passing the usual bounds of his childish innocence.

"Bounds, my dear?" returned Mr. Bucket. "Bounds? Now, Miss Summerson, I'll give you a piece of advice that your husband will find useful when you are happily married and have got a family about you. Whenever a person says to you that they are as innocent as can be in all concerning money, look well after your own money, for they are dead certain to collar it, if they can. Whenever a person proclaims to you 'In worldly matters I'm a child,' you consider that that person is only a-crying off from being held accountable, and that you have got

that person's number, and it's Number One. Now, I am not a poetical man myself, except in a vocal way when it goes round a company, but I'm a practical one, and that's my experience. So's this rule. Fast and loose in one thing, Fast and loose in everything. I never knew it fail. No more will you. Nor no one. With which caution to the unwary, my dear, I take the liberty of pulling this here bell, and so go back to our business."

I believe it had not been for a moment out of his mind, any more than it had been out of my mind, or out of his face. The whole household were amazed to see me, without any notice, at that time in the morning, and so accompanied; and their surprise was not diminished by my inquiries. No one, however, had been there. It could not be doubted that this was the truth.

"Then, Miss Summerson," said my companion, "we can't be too soon at the cottage where those brickmakers are to be found. Most inquiries there I leave to you, if you'll be so good as to make 'em. The naturalest way is the best way, and the naturalest way is your own way."

We set off again immediately. On arriving at the cottage, we found it shut up, and apparently deserted: but one of the neighbours who knew me, and who came out when I was trying to make some one hear, informed me that the two women and their husbands now lived together in another house, made of loose rough bricks, which stood on the margin of the piece of ground where the kilns were, and where the long rows of bricks were drying. We lost no time in repairing to this place, which was within a few hundred yards; and as the door stood ajar, I pushed it open.

There were only three of them sitting at breakfast; the child lying asleep on a bed in the corner. It was Jenny, the mother of the dead child, who was absent. The other woman rose on seeing me; and the men, though they were, as usual, sulky and silent, each gave me a morose nod of recognition. A look passed between them when Mr. Bucket followed me in, and I was surprised to see that the woman evidently knew him.

I had asked leave to enter of course. Liz (the only name by which I knew her) rose to give me her own chair, but I sat down on a stool near the fire, and Mr. Bucket took a corner of the bedstead. Now that I had to speak, and was among people with whom I was not familiar, I became conscious of being hurried and giddy. It was very difficult to begin, and I could not help bursting into tears.

"Liz," said I, "I have come a long way in the night and through the snow, to inquire after a lady——"

"Who has been here, you know," Mr. Bucket struck in, addressing the whole group, with a composed propitiatory face; "that's the lady the young lady means. The lady that was here last night you know."

"And who told *you* as there was anybody here?" inquired Jenny's husband, who had made a surly stop in his eating, to listen, and now measured him with his eye.

"A person of the name of Michael Jackson, with a blue velveteen waistcoat with a double row of mother of pearl buttons," Mr. Bucket immediately answered.

"He had as good mind his own business, whoever he is," growled the man.

"He's out of employment, I believe," said Mr. Bucket, apologetically for Michael Jackson, "and so gets talking."

The woman had not resumed her chair, but stood faltering with her hand upon its broken back, looking at me. I thought she would have spoken to me privately, if she had dared. She was still in this attitude of uncertainty, when her husband, who was eating with a lump of bread and fat in one hand, and his clasp-knife in the other, struck the handle of his knife violently on the table, and told her with an oath to mind *her* own business at any rate, and sit down.

"I should ... to have seen Jenny very much," said I, "for I am sure sh... have told me ... she could about this lady, whom I am very anxious indee... cannot think ... w anxious—to overtake. Will Jenny be here soon? W... she?"

The woman ... had a great desire to answer, but the man, with anoth... openly kicked ... her foot with his heavy boot. He left it to Jenny's hus... say what he ch... se, and after a dogged silence the latter turned his slug... towards me.

"I'm no... ial to gentlefolks coming into my place, as you've heerd ... afore now, ... k. miss. I let their places be, and it's curous they can't ... place be. ... e if I was to go a-wisitin them, ... Howsoever, I ... you as of some others; and I'm ... able to mak... give notice that I'm not a-goin... drawed like ... e soon? No she won't. Where ... She's gone ...

"Did she ...

"Did she ... at last night," he answered, with ... jerk of his h...

"But was ... e? And what did the lady say ... And where is ... I pray you to be so kind as to te... said I, "for I ... gre... w."

"If my master would let me speak, and not say a word of harm—" the timidly began.

"Your master," said her husband, muttering an imprecation with slow em... "will break your neck, if you meddle with wot don't concern you."

After another silence, the husband of the absent woman, turning to me answered me with his usual grumbling unwillingness.

"Wos Jenny here when the lady come? Yes, she wos here when the la... Wot did the lady say to her? Well, I'll tell you wot the lady said to he... said 'You remember me as come one time to talk to you about the you... as had been a-wisiting of you? You remember me as give you somethin... some for a handkercher wot she had left?' Ah, she remembered. So we... Well, then, wos that young lady up at the house now? No, she warn't u... house now. Well, then, lookee here. The lady was up on a journey a... strange as we might think it, and could she rest herself where you're a sc... a hour or so. Yes she could, and so she did. Then she went—it migh... twenty minutes past eleven, and it might be at twenty minutes past tw... ain't got no watches here to know the time by, nor yet clocks. Where did... I don't know where she go'd. She went one way, and Jenny went anoth... went right to Lunnun, and t'other went right from it. That's all about... this man. He heerd it all, and see it all. He knows."

The other man repeated, "That's all about it."

"Was the lady crying?" I inquired.

"Devil a bit," returned the first man. "Her shoes was the worse, ... clothes was the worse, but she warn't—not as I see."

The woman sat with her arms crossed, and her eyes upon the groun... husband had turned his seat a little, so as to face her: and kept his ham... hand upon the table, as if it were in readiness to execute his threat if she di... him.

"I hope you will not object to my asking your wife," said I, "how she looked?"

"Come, then!" he gruffly cried to her. "You hear what he says. ... short, and tell her."

"Bad," replied the woman. "Pale and exhausted. Very bad."

"Did she speak much?"

"Not much, but her voice was hoarse."

She answered, looking all the while at her husband for leave.

"Was she faint?" said I. "Did she eat or drink here?"

"Go on!" said the husband, in answer to her look. "Tell her and cut it short."

"She had a little water, miss, and Jenny fetched her some bread and tea. But she hardly touched it."

"And when she went from here"—I was proceeding, when Jenny's husband impatiently took me up.

"When she went from here, she went right away Nor'ard by the high road. Ask on the road if you doubt me, and see if it warn't so. Now, there's the end. That's all about it."

I glanced at my companion; and finding that he had already risen and was ready to depart, thanked them for what they had told me, and took my leave. The woman looked full at Mr. Bucket as he went out, and he looked full at her.

"Now, Miss Summerson," he said to me, as we walked quickly away. "They've got her ladyship's watch among 'em. That's a positive fact."

"You saw it?" I exclaimed.

"Just as good as saw it," he returned. "Else why should he talk about his 'twenty minutes past,' and about his having no watch to tell the time by? Twenty minutes! He don't usually cut his time so fine as that. If he comes to half-hours, it's as much as *he* does. Now, you see, either her ladyship gave him that watch, or he took it. I think she gave it him. Now, what should she give it him for? What should she give it him for?"

He repeated this question to himself several times, as we hurried on; appearing to balance between a variety of answers that arose in his mind.

"If time could be spared," said Mr. Bucket—"which is the only thing that can't be spared in this case—I might get it out of that woman; but it's too doubtful a chance to trust to, under present circumstances. They are up to keeping a close eye upon her, and any fool knows that a poor creetur like her, beaten and kicked and scarred and bruised from head to foot, will stand by the husband that ill uses her, through thick and thin. There's something kept back. It's a pity but what we had seen the other woman."

I regretted it exceedingly; for she was very grateful, and I felt sure would have resisted no entreaty of mine.

"It's possible, Miss Summerson," said Mr. Bucket, pondering on it, "that her Ladyship sent her up to London with some word for you, and it's possible that her husband got the watch to let her go. It don't come out altogether so plain as to please me, but it's on the cards. Now, I don't take kindly to laying out the money of Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet, on these Roughs, and I don't see my way to the usefulness of it at present. No! So far, our road, Miss Summerson, is far'ard—straight ahead—and keeping everything quiet!"

We called at home once more, that I might send a hasty note to my guardian, and then we hurried back to where we had left the carriage. The horses were brought out as soon as we were seen coming, and we were on the road again in a few minutes.

It had set in snowing at daybreak, and it now snowed hard. The air was so thick with the darkness of the day, and the density of the fall, that we could see but a very little way in any direction. Although it was extremely cold, the snow was but partially frozen, and it churned—with a sound as if it were a beach of small shells—under the hoofs of the horses, into mire and water. They were

times slipped
a standstill t
bled so, and
lead him at l

I could eat
delays, and th
upon me to
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work in whi
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smith, and
the box ag
my lad!"

When w
with the
crashing t
left Saint

"Keep
merson.
seen here.'

d floundered for a mile together, and we were obliged to
st them. One horse fell three times in this first stage, an
s so shaken, that the driver had to dismount from his sad
.

thing, and could not sleep: and I grew so nervous and
slow pace at which we travelled, that I had an unreasonab
out and walk. Yielding to my companion's better sense, I
re I was. All this time, kept fresh by a certain enjoyme
he was engaged, he was up and down at every house we c
ple whom he had never beheld before, as old acquaintanc
saw; talking and drinking and
ith every waggoner, wheelwrigh
; to lose time, and always mou
y face, and his business-like "
xt time, he came from the stai
n, and dropping off him—plash
he had been doing frequently s
e carriage side.
y true that she came on here, Mi
ess by this time, and the dress h

"Still on foot?" said I.

"Still on foot. I think the gentleman you mentioned must be the po
aiming at; and yet I don't like his living down in her own part of the
neither."

"I know so little," said I. "There may be some one else nearer here, c
I never heard."

"That's true. But whatever you do, don't you fall a-crying, my de
don't you worry yourself no more than you can help. Get on, my lad!"

The sleet fell all that day unceasingly, a thick mist came on early, and
rose or lightened for a moment. Such roads I had never seen. I so
feared we had missed the way and got into the ploughed grounds, or the r
If I ever thought of the time I had been out, it presented itself as an i
period of great duration; and I seemed, in a strange way, never to have b
from the anxiety under which I then laboured."

As we advanced, I began to feel misgivings that my companion lost cor
He was the same as before with all the roadside people, but he looke
when he sat by himself on the box. I saw his finger uneasily going ac
across his mouth, during the whole of one long weary stage. I overheard
began to ask the drivers of coaches and other vehicles coming towards
passengers they had seen in other coaches and vehicles that were in
Their replies did not encourage him. He always gave me a re-assuring
his finger, and lift of his eyelid, as he got upon the box again; but he
perplexed now, when he said, "Get on, my lad!"

At last, when we were changing, he told me that he had lost the trac
dress so long that he began to be surprised. It was nothing, he said, to l
a track for one while, and to take it up for another while, and so on; bu
disappeared here in an unaccountable manner, and we had not come upon
This corroborated the apprehensions I had formed, when he began to
direction-posts, and to leave the carriage at cross roads for a quarter of an
a time while he explored them. But, I was not to be down-hearted, he t
for it was as likely as not that the next stage might set us right again.

The next stage, however, ended, as that one ended; we had no new clue. There was a spacious inn here, solitary, but a comfortable substantial building, and as we drove in under a large gateway before I knew it, where a landlady and her pretty daughters came to the carriage-door, entreating me to alight and refresh myself while the horses were making ready, I thought it would be uncharitable to refuse. They took me up-stairs to a warm room, and left me there.

It was at the corner of the house, I remember, looking two ways. On one side, to a stable-yard open to a by-road, where the ostlers were unharnessing the splashed and tired horses from the muddy carriage; and beyond that, to the by-road itself, across which the sign was heavily swinging: on the other side, to a wood of dark pine-trees. Their branches were encumbered with snow, and it silently dropped off in wet heaps while I stood at the window. Night was setting in, and its bleakness was enhanced by the contrast of the pictured fire glowing and gleaming in the window-pane. As I looked among the stems of the trees, and followed the discoloured marks in the snow where the thaw was sinking into it and undermining it, I thought of the motherly face brightly set off by daughters that had just now welcomed me, and of *my* mother lying down in such a wood to die.

I was frightened when I found them all about me, but I remembered that before I fainted I tried very hard not to do it; and that was some little comfort. They cushioned me up, on a large sofa by the fire; and then the comely landlady told me that I must travel no further to-night, but must go to bed. But this put me into such a tremble lest they should detain me there, that she soon recalled her words, and compromised for a rest of half-an-hour.

A good endearing creature she was. She, and her three fair girls all so busy about me. I was to take hot soup and broiled fowl, while Mr. Bucket dried himself and dined elsewhere; but I could not do it when a snug round table was presently spread by the fireside, though I was very unwilling to disappoint them. However, I could take some toast and some hot negus; and as I really enjoyed that refreshment, it made some recompense.

Punctual to the time, at the half-hour's end the carriage came rumbling under the gateway, and they took me down, warmed, refreshed, comforted by kindness, and safe (I assured them) not to faint any more. After I had got in and had taken a grateful leave of them all, the youngest daughter—a blooming girl of nineteen, who was to be the first married, they had told me—got upon the carriage step, reached in, and kissed me. I have never seen her, from that hour, but I think of her to this hour as my friend.

The transparent windows with the fire and light, looking so bright and warm from the cold darkness out of doors, were soon gone, and again we were crushing and churning the loose snow. We went on with toil enough; but the dismal roads were not much worse than they had been, and the stage was only nine miles. My companion smoking on the box—I had thought at the last inn of begging him to do so, when I saw him standing at a great fire in a comfortable cloud of tobacco—was as vigilant as ever; and as quickly down and up again, when we came to any human abode or any human creature. He had lighted his little dark lantern, which seemed to be a favourite with him, for we had lamps to the carriage; and every now and then he turned it upon me, to see that I was doing well. There was a folding-window to the carriage-head, but I never closed it, for it seemed like shutting out hope.

We came to the end of the stage, and still the lost trace was not recovered. I looked at him anxiously when we stopped to change; but I knew by his yet graver face, as he stood watching the ostlers, that he had heard nothing. Almost in an instant afterwards, as I leaned back in my seat, he looked in, with his lighted lantern in his hand, an excited and quite different man.

"What is it?" said I, starting. "Is she here?"

"No, no. Don't deceive yourself, my dear. Nobody's here. Be got it!"

The crystallised snow was in his eyelashes, in his hair, lying in ridges dress. He had to shake it from his face, and get his breath before he to me.

"Now, Miss Summerson," said he, beating his finger on the apron, you be disappointed at what I'm a-going to do. You know me. I'm In Bucket, and you can trust me. We've come a long way; never mind horses out there for the next stage up! Quick!"

There was a [illegible] d a man came running out of the to know "if he

"Up, I tel[illegible] sh? Up!"

"Up?" sai[illegible] lon! Are we going back?"

"Miss Sur[illegible] ck. Straight back as a die. Yo me. Don't l[illegible] er, by G—."

"The othe[illegible]

"You calle[illegible] I'll follow her. Bring those out here, for a [illegible] some of you!"

"You will not desert [illegible] e in search of; you will not aban on such a night, and in su[illegible] ind as I know her to be in?" s an agony, and grasping his hand.

"You are right, my dear, I won't. But I'll follow the other. Look al with them horses. Send a man for'ard in the saddle to the next stage. him send another for'ard again, and order four on, up, right through. My don't you be afraid!"

These orders, and the way in which he ran about the yard, urging them. a general excitement that was scarcely less bewildering to me than the change. But in the height of the confusion, a mounted man galloped order the relays, and our horses were put to with great speed.

"My dear," said Mr. Bucket, jumping to his seat, and looking in "you'll excuse me if I'm too familiar—don't you fret and worry yourself than you can help. I say nothing else at present; but you know me, n now, don't you?"

I endeavoured to say that I knew he was far more capable than I of what we ought to do; but was he sure that this was right? Could I not ward by myself in search of——I grasped his hand again in my distress, ar pered it to him—of my own mother.

"My dear," he answered, "I know, I know, and would I put you wr you think? Inspector Bucket. Now you know me, don't you?"

What could I say but yes!

"Then you keep up as good a heart as you can, and you rely upon standing by you, no less than by Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet. Now, right there?"

"All right, sir!"

"Off she goes, then. And get on, my lads!"

We were again upon the melancholy road by which we had come; te the miry sleet and thawing snow, as if they were torn up by a waterwheel

CHAPTER LVIII.

A WINTRY DAY AND NIGHT.

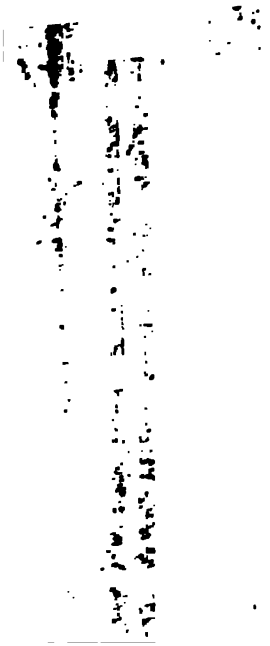
STILL impassive, as behoves its breeding, the Dedlock town house carries itself as usual towards the street of dismal grandeur. There are powdered heads from time to time in the little windows of the hall, looking out at the untaxed powder falling all day from the sky; and, in the same conservatory, there is peach blossom turning itself exotically to the great hall fire from the nipping weather out of doors. It is given out that my Lady has gone down into Lincolnshire, but is expected to return presently.

Rumour, busy overmuch, however, will not go down into Lincolnshire. It persists in flitting and chattering about town. It knows that that poor unfortunate man, Sir Leicester, has been sadly used. It hears, my dear child, all sorts of shocking things. It makes the world of five miles round, quite merry. Not to know that there is something wrong at the Dedlocks' is to augur yourself unknown. One of the peachy-cheeked charmers with the skeleton throats, is already apprised of all the principal circumstances that will come out before the Lords, on Sir Leicester's application for a bill of divorce.

At Blaze and Sparkle's the jewellers, and at Sheen and Gloss's the mercers, it is and will be for several hours the topic of the age, the feature of the century. The patronesses of those establishments, albeit so loftily inscrutable, being as nicely weighed and measured there as any other article of the stock-in-trade, are perfectly understood in this new fashion by the rawest hand behind the counter. "Our people, Mr. Jones," said Blaze and Sparkle to the hand in question on engaging him, "our people, sir, are sheep—mere sheep. Where two or three marked ones go, all the rest follow. Keep those two or three in your eye, Mr. Jones, and you have the flock." So, likewise, Sheen and Gloss to *their* Jones, in reference to knowing where to have the fashionable people, and how to bring what they (Sheen and Gloss) choose, into fashion. On similar unerring principles, Mr. Sladdery the librarian, and indeed the great farmer of gorgeous sheep, admits this very day, "Why yes, sir, there certainly *are* reports concerning Lady Dedlock, very current indeed among my high connexion, sir. You see, my high connexion must talk about something, sir; and it's only to get a subject into vogue with one or two ladies I could name, to make it go down with the whole. Just what I should have done with those ladies, sir, in the case of any novelty you had left to me to bring in, they have done of themselves in this case through knowing Lady Dedlock, and being perhaps a little innocently jealous of her too, sir. You'll find, sir, that this topic will be very popular among my high connexion. If it had been a speculation, sir, it would have brought money. And when I say so, you may trust to my being right, sir; for I have made it my business to study my high connexion, and to be able to wind it up like a clock, sir."

Thus rumour thrives in the capital, and will not go down into Lincolnshire. By half-past five, post meridian, Horse Guards' time, it has even elicited a new remark from the Honourable Mr. Stables, which bids fair to outshine the old one, on which he has so long rested his colloquial reputation. This sparkling sally is to the effect that, although he always knew she was the best-groomed woman in the stud, he had no idea she was a bolter. It is immensely received in turf-circles.

At feasts and festivals also: in firmaments she has often graced, and among constellations she outshone but yesterday, she is still the prevalent subject. What



own talk, is, that people hover
nexion, people who know nothi
essential to their reputation to
her at second-hand with the last
new drawl, and the last new
second-hand but considered equ
If there be any man of letters, art
in him to support the feeble siste

So goes the wintry day outside

Sir Leicester lying in his bed
distinctness. He is enjoined to si
opiate to lull his pain; for his c
asleep, though sometimes he seem
his bedstead to be moved out ne
inclement weather; and his head t
snow and sleet. He watches it as

Upon the least noise in the house,
The old housekeeper, sitting by hi
"No, he has not come back yet, S
went. He has been but a little tim

He withdraws his hand, and falls
they seem, by being long looked a
to close his eyes for a minute
blots.

He began to look at them as soo
when he conceives it to be necessar
It is very cold and wet. Let ther
expected. Please see to it yourself.
Mrs. Rouncewell with a heavy hear

"For I dread, George," the old l
her company when she h

"I am thankful I have lived long enough to be with Sir Leicester in this illness and trouble; for I know I am not too old, nor too useless, to be a welcomer sight to him than anybody else in my place would be. But the step on the Ghost's Walk will walk my Lady down, George; it has been many a day behind her, and now it will pass her, and go on."

"Well, mother dear, I say again, I hope not."

"Ah, so do I, George," the old lady returns, shaking her head, and parting her folded hands. "But if my fears come true, and he has to know it, who will tell him!"

"Are these her rooms?"

"These are my Lady's rooms, just as she left them."

"Why now," says the trooper, glancing round him, and speaking in a lower voice, "I begin to understand how you come to think as you do think, mother. Rooms get an awful look about them when they are fitted up, like these, for one person you are used to see in them, and that person is away under any shadow: let alone being God knows where."

He is not far out. As all partings foreshadow the great final one,—so, empty rooms, bereft of a familiar presence, mournfully whisper what your room and what mine must one day be. My Lady's state has a hollow look, thus gloomy and abandoned; and in the inner apartment, where Mr. Bucket last night made his secret perquisition, the traces of her dresses and her ornaments, even the mirrors accustomed to reflect them when they were a portion of herself, have a desolate and vacant air. Dark and cold as the wintry day is, it is darker and colder in these deserted chambers than in many a hut that will barely exclude the weather; and though the servants heap fires in the grates, and set the couches and the chairs within the warm glass screens that let their ruddy light shoot through to the furthest corners, there is a heavy cloud upon the rooms which no light will dispel.

The old housekeeper and her son remain until the preparations are complete, and then she returns up-stairs. Volumnia has taken Mrs. Rouncewell's place in the meantime: though pearl necklaces and rouge pots, however calculated to embellish Bath, are but indifferent comforts to the invalid under present circumstances. Volumnia not being supposed to know (and indeed not knowing) what is the matter, has found it a ticklish task to offer appropriate observations; and consequently has supplied their place with distracting smoothings of the bed-linen, elaborate locomotion on tiptoe, vigilant peeping at her kinsman's eyes, and one exasperating whisper to herself of "He is asleep." In disproof of which superfluous remark, Sir Leicester has indignantly written on the slate, "I am not."

Yielding, therefore, the chair at the bedside to the quaint old housekeeper, Volumnia sits at a table a little removed, sympathetically sighing. Sir Leicester watches the sleet and snow, and listens for the returning steps that he expects. In the ears of his old servant, looking as if she had stepped out of an old picture-frame to attend a summoned Dedlock to another world, the silence is fraught with echoes of her own words, "Who will tell him!"

He has been under his valet's hands this morning, to be made presentable; and is as well got up as the circumstances will allow. He is propped with pillows, his grey hair is brushed in its usual manner, his linen is arranged to a nicety, and he is wrapped in a responsible dressing-gown. His eye-glass and his watch are ready to his hand. It is necessary—less to his own dignity now perhaps, than for her sake—that he should be seen as little disturbed, and as much himself, as may be. Women will talk, and Volumnia, though a Dedlock, is no exceptional case. He keeps her here, there is little doubt, to prevent her talking somewhere else. He

is very ill: but he makes his present stand against distress of mind and body, most courageously.

The fair Volumnia being one of those sprightly girls who cannot long continue silent without imminent peril of seizure by the dragon Boredom, soon indicates the approach of that monster with a series of undisguisable yawns. Finding it impossible to suppress those yawns by any other process than conversation, she compliments Mrs. Rouncewell on her son; declaring that he positively is one of the finest figures she ever saw, and as soldierly a looking person she should think, as what's his name, her favourite Life Guardsman—the man she dotes on—the dearest of creatures—who was killed at Waterloo.

Sir Leicester hears thi surprise, and stares about him in such a confused way, tha ls it necessary to explain.

"Miss Dedlock don't a, Sir Leicester, but my youngest I have found him. He

Sir Leicester breaks . "George? Your son George come home, Mrs. Rou

The old housekeeper ak God. Yes, Sir Leicester."

Does this discovery eturn of some one so long gone, come upon him as a str hopes? Does he think, "Shall I not, with the aid I have, this; there being fewer hours in her case than there are yea

It is of no use entreating him, he is determined to speak now, and he does. In a thick crowd of sounds, but still intelligibly enough to be understood.

"Why did you not tell me, Mrs. Rouncewell?"

"It happened only yesterday, Sir Leicester, and I doubted your being well enough to be talked to of such things."

Besides, the giddy Volumnia now remembers with her little scream that nobody was to have known of his being Mrs. Rouncewell's son, and that she was not to have told. But Mrs. Rouncewell protests, with warmth enough to swell the stomacher, that of course she would have told Sir Leicester as soon as he got better.

"Where is your son George, Mrs. Rouncewell?" asks Sir Leicester.

Mrs. Rouncewell, not a little alarmed by his disregard of the doctor's injunctions, replies, in London.

"Where in London?"

Mrs. Rouncewell is constrained to admit that he is in the house.

"Bring him here to my room. Bring him directly."

The old lady can do nothing but go in search of him. Sir Leicester, with such power of movement as he has, arranges himself a little, to receive him. When he has done so, he looks out again at the falling sleet and snow, and listens again for the returning steps. A quantity of straw has been tumbled down in the street to deaden the noises there, and she might be driven to the door perhaps without his hearing wheels.

He is lying thus, apparently forgetful of his newer and minor surprise, when the housekeeper returns, accompanied by her trooper son. Mr. George approaches softly to the bedside, makes his bow, squares his chest, and stands, with his face flushed, very heartily ashamed of himself.

"Good Heaven, and it is really George Rouncewell!" exclaims Sir Leicester. "Do you remember me, George?"

The trooper needs to look at him, and to separate this sound from that sound, before he knows what he has said: but doing this, and being a little helped by his mother, he replies:

"I must have a very bad memory, indeed, Sir Leicester, if I failed to remember you."

"When I look at you, George Rouncewell," Sir Leicester observes with difficulty, "I see something of a boy at Chesney Wold—I remember well—very well."

He looks at the trooper until tears come into his eyes, and then he looks at the sleet and snow again.

"I ask your pardon, Sir Leicester," says the trooper, "but would you accept of my arms to raise you up. You would lie easier, Sir Leicester, if you would allow me to move you."

"If you please, George Rouncewell; if you will be so good."

The trooper takes him in his arms like a child, lightly raises him, and turns him with his face more towards the window. "Thank you. You have your mother's gentleness," returns Sir Leicester, "and your own strength. Thank you."

He signs to him with his hand not to go away. George quietly remains at the bedside, waiting to be spoken to.

"Why did you wish for secrecy?" It takes Sir Leicester some time to ask this.

"Truly I am not much to boast of, Sir Leicester, and I—I should still, Sir Leicester, if you was not so indisposed—which I hope you will not be long—I should still hope for the favour of being allowed to remain unknown in general. That involves explanations not very hard to be guessed at, not very well timed here, and not very creditable to myself. However opinions may differ on a variety of subjects, I should think it would be universally agreed, Sir Leicester, that I am not much to boast of."

"You have been a soldier," observes Sir Leicester, "and a faithful one."

George makes his military bow. "As far as that goes, Sir Leicester, I have done my duty under discipline, and it was the least I could do."

"You find me," says Sir Leicester, whose eyes are much attracted towards him, "far from well, George Rouncewell."

"I am very sorry both to hear it and to see it, Sir Leicester."

"I am sure you are. No. In addition to my older malady, I have had a sudden and bad attack. Something that deadens—" making an endeavour to pass one hand down one side; "and confuses—" touching his lips.

George, with a look of assent and sympathy, makes another bow. The different times when they were both young men (the trooper much the younger of the two), and looked at one another down at Chesney Wold, arise before them both, and soften both.

Sir Leicester, evidently with a great determination to say, in his own manner, something that is on his mind before relapsing into silence, tries to raise himself among his pillows a little more. George observant of the action, takes him in his arms again and places him as he desires to be. "Thank you, George. You are another self to me. You have often carried my spare gun at Chesney Wold, George. You are familiar to me in these strange circumstances, very familiar." He has put Sir Leicester's sounder arm over his shoulder in lifting him up, and Sir Leicester is slow in drawing it away again, as he says these words.

"I was about to add," he presently goes on, "I was about to add, respecting this attack, that it was unfortunately simultaneous with a slight misunderstanding between my Lady and myself. I do not mean that there was any difference between us (for there has been none), but that there was a misunderstanding of certain circumstances important only to ourselves, which deprives me, for a little while, of my Lady's society. She has found it necessary to make a journey,—I trust will shortly return. Volumnia, do I make myself intelligible? The words are not quite under my command, in the manner of pronouncing them."

Volumnia understands him perfectly; and in truth he delivers himself with far

greater plainness than could have been supposed possible a minute ag
effort by which he does so, is written in the anxious and labouring expre
his face. Nothing but the strength of his purpose enables him to make it

"Therefore, Volumnia, I desire to say in your presence—and in the pre
my old retainer and friend, Mrs. Rouncewell, whose truth and fidelity no
question—and in the presence of her son, George, who comes back like a
recollection of my youth in the home of my ancestors at Chesney Wold-
I should relapse, in case I should not recover, in case I should lose both m
and the power of writing, though I hope for better things—"

The old housekeeper weeping silently; Volumnia in the greatest agitati
the freshest bloom on her oper with his arms folded and
a little bent, respectfully a.

"Therefore I desire t call you all to witness—be
Volumnia, with yourself, —that I am on unaltered ter
Lady Dedlock. That I a hatever of complaint against he
I have ever had the stron r her, and that I retain it undi
Say this to herself, and t you ever say less than this, you
guilty of deliberate falseh

Volumnia trembling will observe his injunctions to t

"My Lady is too h handsome, too accomplished, t
rior in most respects t by whom she is surrounded, not
her enemies and traducers, I dare say. Let it be known to them, as I
known to you, that being of sound mind, memory, and understanding, I r
disposition I have made in her favour. I abridge nothing I have ever b
upon her. I am on unaltered terms with her, and I recall—having the fu
to do it if I were so disposed, as you see—no act I have done for her a
and happiness."

His formal array of words might have at any other time, as it has o
something ludicrous in it; but at this time it is serious and affecting. H
earnestness, his fidelity, his gallant shielding of her, his generous conque
own wrong and his own pride for her sake, are simply honourable, manly,
Nothing less worthy can be seen through the lustre of such qualities in t
monest mechanic, nothing less worthy can be seen in the best-born gentle
such a light both aspire alike, both rise alike, both children of the d
equally.

Overpowered by his exertions, he lays his head back on his pillows, a
his eyes; for not more than a minute; when he again resumes his watchi
weather, and his attention to the muffled sounds. In the rendering of th
services, and in the manner of their acceptance, the trooper has become
as necessary to him. Nothing has been said, but it is quite understood,
a step or two backward to be out of sight, and mounts guard a little be
mother's chair.

The day is now beginning to decline. The mist, and the sleet into w
snow has all resolved itself, are darker, and the blaze begins to tell mor
upon the room walls and furniture. The gloom augments; the bright ga
up in the streets; and the pertinacious oil lamps which yet hold their grou
with their source of life half frozen and half thawed, twinkle gaspingly,
fish out of water—as they are. The world, which has been rumbling
straw and pulling at the bell, "to inquire," begins to go home, begins to
dine, to discuss its dear friend, with all the last new modes, as already m

Now, does Sir Leicester become worse; restless, uneasy, and in gr
Volumnia lighting a candle (with a predestined aptitude for doing somet
jectionable) is bidden to put it out again, for it is not yet dark enough.

very dark too; as dark as it will be all night. By-and-by she tries again. No! Put it out. It is not dark enough yet.

His old housekeeper is the first to understand that he is striving to uphold the fiction with himself that it is not growing late.

"Dear Sir Leicester, my honoured master," she softly whispers, "I must, for your own good, and my duty, take the freedom of begging and praying that you will not lie here in the lone darkness, watching and waiting, and dragging through the time. Let me draw the curtains and light the candles, and make things more comfortable about you. The church-clocks will strike the hours just the same, Sir Leicester, and the night will pass away just the same. My Lady will come back, just the same."

"I know it, Mrs. Rouncewell, but I am weak—and he has been so long gone."

"Not so very long, Sir Leicester. Not twenty-four hours yet."

"But that is a long time. O it is a long time!"

He says it with a groan that wrings her heart.

She knows that this is not a period for bringing the rough light upon him; she thinks his tears too sacred to be seen, even by her. Therefore, she sits in the darkness for a while, without a word; then gently begins to move about; now stirring the fire, now standing at the dark window looking out. Finally he tells her, with recovered self-command, "As you say, Mrs. Rouncewell, it is no worse for being confessed. It is getting late, and they are not come. Light the room!" When it is lighted, and the weather shut out, it is only left to him to listen.

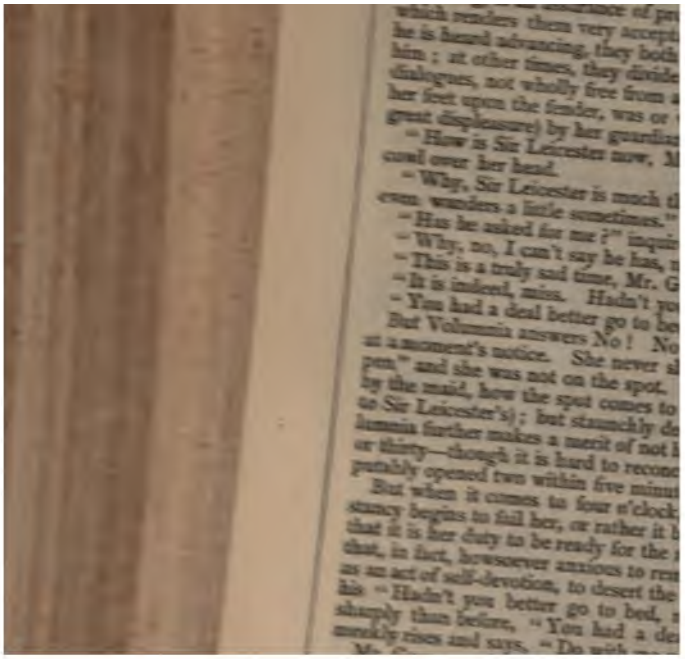
But they find that, however dejected and ill he is, he brightens when a quiet pretence is made of looking at the fires in her rooms, and being sure that everything is ready to receive her. Poor pretence as it is, these allusions to her being expected keep up hope within him.

Midnight comes, and with it the same blank. The carriages in the streets are few, and other late sounds in that neighbourhood there are none, unless a man so very nomadically drunk as to stray into the frigid zone goes brawling and bellowing along the pavement. Upon this wintry night it is so still, that listening to the intense silence is like looking at intense darkness. If any distant sound be audible in this case, it departs through the gloom like a feeble light in that, and all is heavier than before.

The corporation of servants are dismissed to bed (not unwilling to go, for they were up all last night), and only Mrs. Rouncewell and George keep watch in Sir Leicester's room. As the night lags tardily on—or rather when it seems to stop altogether, at between two and three o'clock—they find a restless craving on him to know more about the weather, now he cannot see it. Hence George, patrolling regularly every half hour to the rooms so carefully looked after, extends his march to the hall-door, looks about him, and brings back the best report he can make of the worst of nights; the sleet still falling, and even the stone footways lying ankle-deep in icy sludge.

Volumnia, in her room up a retired landing on the staircase—the second turning past the end of the carving and gilding—a cousinly room containing a fearful abortion of a portrait of Sir Leicester, banished for its crimes, and commanding in the day a solemn yard, planted with dried-up shrubs like antediluvian specimens of black tea—is a prey to horrors of many kinds. Not last nor least among them, possibly, is a horror of what may befall her little income, in the event, as she expresses it, "of anything happening" to Sir Leicester. Anything, in this sense, meaning one thing only, and that the last thing that can happen to the consciousness of any baronet in the known world.

An effect of these horrors is, that Volumnia finds she cannot go to bed in her own room, or sit by the fire in her own room, but must come forth with her hair hanging



house—no novelty to him once at Chesney Wold—goes up the stairs and through the chief rooms, holding up his light at arm's length. Thinking of his varied fortunes within the last few weeks, and of his rustic boyhood, and of the two periods of his life so strangely brought together across the wide intermediate space; thinking of the murdered man whose image is fresh in his mind; thinking of the lady who has disappeared from these very rooms, and the tokens of whose recent presence are all here; thinking of the master of the house up-stairs, and of the foreboding "Who will tell him!" he looks here and looks there, and reflects how he *might* see something now, which it would tax his boldness to walk up to, lay his hand upon, and prove to be a fancy. But it is all blank; blank as the darkness above and below, while he goes up the great staircase again; blank as the oppressive silence.

"All is still in readiness, George Rouncewell?"

"Quite orderly and right, Sir Leicester."

"No word of any kind?"

The trooper shakes his head.

"No letter that can possibly have been overlooked?"

But he knows there is no such hope as that, and lays his head down without looking for an answer.

Very familiar to him, as he said himself some hours ago, George Rouncewell lifts him into easier positions through the long remainder of the blank wintry night; and, equally familiar with his unexpressed wish, extinguishes the light, and undraws the curtains at the first late break of day. The day comes like a phantom. Cold, colourless, and vague, it sends a warning streak before it of a deathlike hue, as if it cried out, "Look what I am bringing you, who watch there! Who will tell him!"

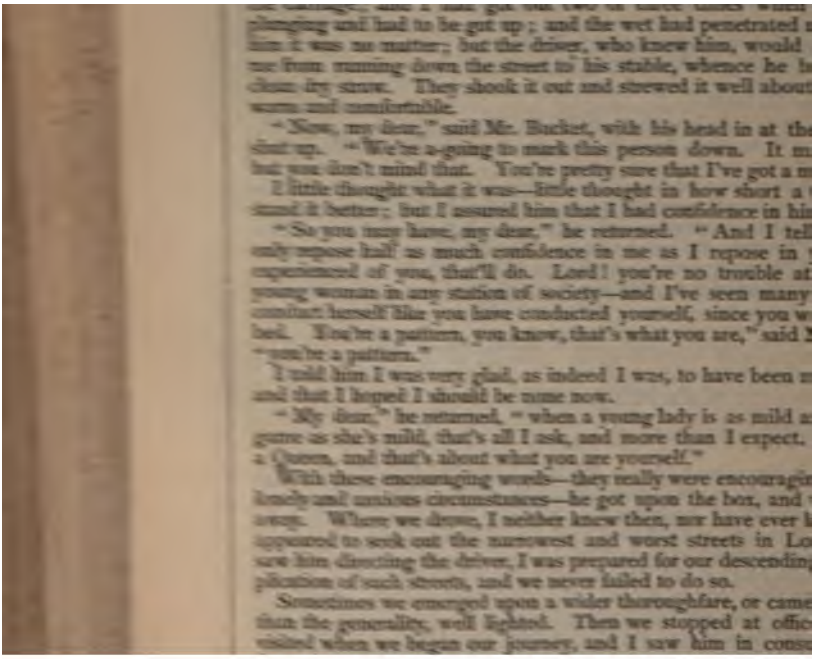
CHAPTER LIX.

ESTHER'S NARRATIVE.

It was three o'clock in the morning when the houses outside London did at last begin to exclude the country, and to close us in with streets. We had made our way along roads in a far worse condition than when we had traversed them by daylight, both the fall and the thaw having lasted ever since; but the energy of my companion never slackened. It had only been, as I thought, of less assistance than the horses in getting us on, and it had often aided them. They had stopped exhausted, halfway up hills, they had been driven through streams of turbulent water, they had slipped down and become entangled with the harness; but he and his little lantern had been always ready, and when the mishap was set right, I had never heard any variation in his cool, "Get on, my lads!"

The steadiness and confidence with which he had directed our journey back, I could not account for. Never wavering, he never even stopped to make an inquiry until we were within a few miles of London. A very few words, here and there, were then enough for him; and thus we came, at between three and four o'clock in the morning, into Islington.

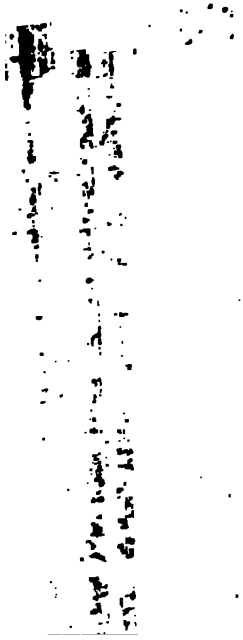
I will not dwell on the suspense and anxiety with which I reflected all this time, that we were leaving my mother farther and farther behind every minute. I think I had some strong hope that he must be right, and could not fail to have a satisfactory object in following this woman; but I tormented myself with questioning it, and discussing it, during the whole journey. What was to ensue when we found



that we have marked this person down, and that you may be of use to
I know it myself. I don't like to ask such a thing, my dear, but would
little way?"
e I got out directly, and took his arm.
so easy to keep your feet," said Mr. Bucket; "but take time."
h I looked about me confusedly and hurriedly, as we crossed the street,
I knew the place. "Are we in Holborn?" I asked him.
said Mr. Bucket. "Do you know this turning?"
s like Chancery Lane."
as christened so, my dear," said Mr. Bucket.
ed down it, and as we went, shuffling through the sleet, I heard the
e half-past five. We passed on in silence, and as quickly as we could
foothold, when some one coming towards us on the narrow pavement,
a cloak, stopped and stood aside to give me room. In the same
heard an exclamation of wonder, and my own name, from Mr. Wood-
new his voice very well.
unexpected, and so—I don't know what to call it, whether pleasant or
come upon it after my feverish wandering journey, and in the midst of
that I could not keep back the tears from my eyes. It was like hearing
a strange country.
ar Miss Summerson, that you should be out at this hour, and in such

heard from my guardian of my having been called away on some un-
usiness, and said so to dispense with any explanation. I told him that
just left a coach, and were going—but then I was obliged to look at
tion.
you see, Mr. Woodcourt;" he had caught the name from me; "we
at present into the next street.—Inspector Bucket."
odcourt, disregarding my remonstrances, had hurriedly taken off his
was putting it about me. "That's a good move, too," said Mr.
isting. "a very good move."
go with you?" said Mr. Woodcourt. I don't know whether to me or
tion.
Lord!" exclaimed Mr. Bucket, taking the answer on himself. "Of
may."
ll said in a moment, and they took me between them, wrapped in the

just left Richard," said Mr. Woodcourt. "I have been sitting with
ten o'clock last night."
me, he is ill!"
, believe me; not ill, but not quite well. He was depressed and faint
w he gets so worried and so worn sometimes—and Ada sent to me of
d when I came home I found her note, and came straight here. Well!
vived so much after a little while, and Ada was so happy, and so con-
ts being my doing, though God knows I had little enough to do with it,
ained with him until he had been fast asleep some hours. As fast asleep
ow, I hope!"
idly and familiar way of speaking of them, his unaffected devotion to
grateful confidence with which I knew he had inspired my darling, and
t he was to her; could I separate all this from his promise to me?
tless I must have been if it had not recalled the words he said to me,
as so moved by the change in my appearance: "I will accept him as a
t shall be a sacred one!"



"Why, you see," said M upon her to-night. A most mation out of that girl, and

"At all events, they woul the other man. "She's bee

"Well, that's true," he r moment."

All this passed in a whispe faintly hear crying and moan purpose, Mr. Bucket went up after he had knocked twice; a

"Miss Summerson," said M your confidence, I may remain

"You are truly kind," I ans from you; if I keep any, it is a

"I quite understand. Trust fully respect it."

"I trust implicitly to you," I keep your promise."

After a short time the little r advanced towards us in it with h merson," he said, "and sit dow I have received I understand yo girl and see if anything can be d where that I particularly want. her; but she is so twisted and c hurting."

We all three went into the h smelt close too from being up al scared, sorrowful-looking little r polite manner, as

She looked very much astonished, as she had reason for doing, and looked particularly hard at me.

"My little woman," said Mr. Snagsby, sitting down in the remotest corner by the door, as if he were taking a liberty, "it is not unlikely that you may inquire of me why Inspector Bucket, Mr. Woodcourt, and a lady, call upon us in Cook's Court, Cursitor Street, at the present hour. I don't know. I have not the least idea. If I was to be informed, I should despair of understanding, and I'd rather not be told."

He appeared so miserable, sitting with his head upon his hand, and I appeared so unwelcome, that I was going to offer an apology, when Mr. Bucket took the matter on himself.

"Now, Mr. Snagsby," said he, "the best thing you can do, is to go along with Mr. Woodcourt to look after your Guster——"

"My Guster, Mr. Bucket!" cried Mr. Snagsby. "Go on, sir, go on. I shall be charged with that next."

"And to hold the candle," pursued Mr. Bucket without correcting himself, "or hold her, or make yourself useful in any way you're asked. Which there's not a man alive more ready to do; for you're a man of urbanity and suavity, you know, and you've got the sort of heart that can feel for another. (Mr. Woodcourt, would you be so good as see to her, and if you can get that letter from her, to let me have it as soon as ever you can?)"

As they went out, Mr. Bucket made me sit down in a corner by the fire, and take off my wet shoes, which he turned up to dry upon the fender; talking all the time.

"Don't you be at all put out, miss, by the want of a hospitable look from Mrs. Snagsby there, because she's under a mistake altogether. She'll find that out, sooner than will be agreeable to a lady of her generally correct manner of forming her thoughts, because I'm a-going to explain it to her." Here, standing on the hearth with his wet hat and shawls in his hand, himself a pile of wet, he turned to Mrs. Snagsby. "Now, the first thing that I say to you, as a married woman, possessing what you may call charms, you know—'Believe me, if all those endearing, and cetrer'—you're well acquainted with the song, because it's in vain for you to tell me that you and good society are strangers—charms—attractions, mind you, that ought to give you confidence in yourself—is, that you've done it."

Mrs. Snagsby looked rather alarmed, relented a little, and faltered, what did Mr. Bucket mean?

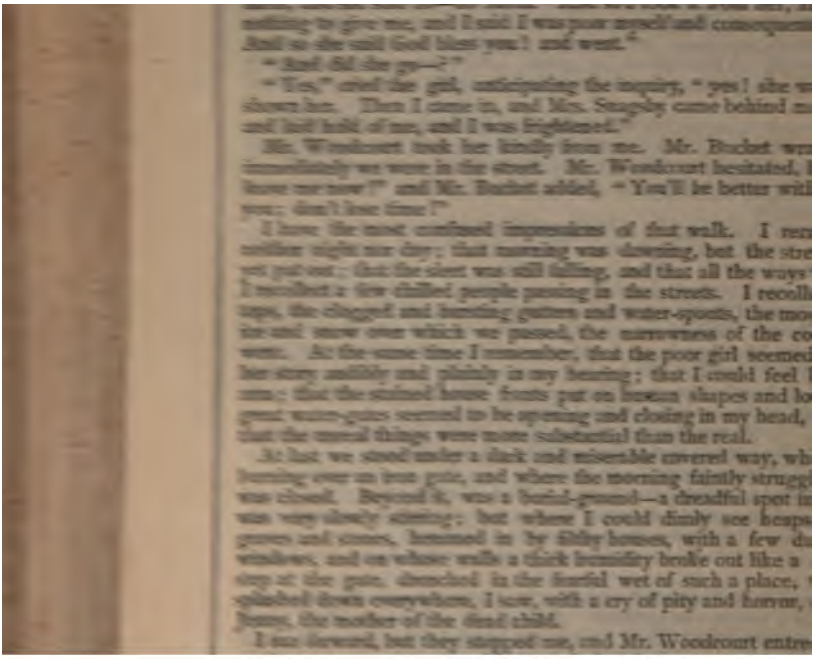
"What does Mr. Bucket mean?" he repeated; and I saw by his face, that all the time he talked he was listening for the discovery of the letter—to my own great agitation; for I knew then how important it must be; "I'll tell you what he means, ma'am. Go and see Othello acted. That's the tragedy for you."

Mrs. Snagsby consciously asked why.

"Why?" said Mr. Bucket. "Because you'll come to that, if you don't look out. Why, at the very moment while I speak, I know what your mind's not wholly free from, respecting this young lady. But shall I tell you who this young lady is? Now, come, you're what I call an intellectual woman—with your soul too large for your body, if you come to that, and chafing it—and you know me, and you recollect where you saw me last, and what was talked of in that circle. Don't you? Yes! Very well. This young lady is that young lady."

Mrs. Snagsby appeared to understand the reference better than I did at the time.

"And Toughey—him as you call Jo—was mixed up in the same business, and no other; and the law-writer that you know of, was mixed up in the same business, and no other; and your husband, with no more knowledge of it than your great-grandfather, was mixed up (by Mr. Tulkinghorn, deceased, his best customer)



mother. They were all occupied with the poor girl, and I heard Mr. Woodcourt directing them, and speaking to her often. At length he came in with Mr. Bucket; and said that as it was important to address her gently, he thought it best that I should ask her for whatever information we desired to obtain. There was no doubt that she could now reply to questions, if she were soothed, and not alarmed. The questions, Mr. Bucket said, were, how she came by the letter, what passed between her and the person who gave her the letter, and where the person went. Holding my mind as steadily as I could to these points, I went into the next room with them. Mr. Woodcourt would have remained outside, but at my solicitation went in with us.

The poor girl was sitting on the floor where they had laid her down. They stood around her though at a little distance, that she might have air. She was not pretty, and looked weak and poor; but she had a plaintive and a good face, though it was still a little wild. I kneeled on the ground beside her, and put her poor head upon my shoulder; whereupon she drew her arm round my neck, and burst into tears.

"My poor girl," said I, laying my face against her forehead; for indeed I was crying too, and trembling; "it seems cruel to trouble you now, but more depends on our knowing something about this letter, than I could tell you in an hour."

She began piteously declaring that she didn't mean any harm, she didn't mean any harm, Mrs. Snagsby!

"We are all sure of that," said I. "But pray tell me how you got it."

"Yes, dear lady, I will, and tell you true. I'll tell true, indeed, Mrs. Snagsby."

"I am sure of that," said I. "And how was it?"

"I had been out on an errand, dear lady—long after it was dark—quite late; and when I came home, I found a common-looking person, all wet and muddy, looking up at our house. When she saw me coming in at the door, she called me back, and said did I live here? and I said yes, and she said she knew only one or two places about here, but had lost her way, and couldn't find them. O what shall I do, what shall I do! They won't believe me! She didn't say any harm to me, and I didn't say any harm to her, indeed, Mrs. Snagsby!"

It was necessary for her mistress to comfort her: which she did, I must say, with a good deal of contrition: before she could be got beyond this.

"She could not find those places," said I.

"No!" cried the girl, shaking her head. "No! Couldn't find them. And she was so faint, and lame, and miserable, O so wretched! that if you had seen her, Mr. Snagsby, you'd have given her half-a-crown, I know!"

"Well, Guster, my girl," said he, at first not knowing what to say. "I hope I should."

"And yet she was so well spoken," said the girl, looking at me with wide open eyes, "that it made a person's heart bleed. And so she said to me, did I know the way to the burying-ground? And I asked her which burying-ground? And she said, the poor burying-ground. And so I told her I had been a poor child myself, and it was according to parishes. But she said she meant a poor burying-ground not very far from here, where there was an archway, and a step, and an iron gate."

As I watched her face, and soothed her to go on, I saw that Mr. Bucket received this with a look which I could not separate from one of alarm.

"O dear, dear!" cried the girl, pressing her hair back with her hands, "what shall I do, what shall I do! She meant the burying-ground where the man was buried that took the sleeping-stuff—that you came home and told us of, Mr. Snagsby—that frightened me so, Mrs. Snagsby. O I am frightened again. Hold me!"

[illegible] he believes that he has none. Yet he is not
sure he?"

My dear girl had been to see us lately, every day; som
But we had foreseen, all along, that this would only last u
We knew full well that her fervent heart was as full of
towards her cousin John as it had ever been, and we acquit
any injunctions upon her to stay away; but we knew on the
it a part of her duty to him, to be sparing of her visits at
dian's delicacy had soon perceived this, and had tried to
thought she was right.

"Dear, unfortunate, mistaken Richard," said I. "Wh
his delusion!"

"He is not in the way to do so now, my dear," replied
more he suffers, the more averse he will be to me: having n
representative of the great occasion of his suffering."

I could not help adding, "So unreasonably!"

"Ah, Dame Trot, Dame Trot!" returned my guardian
reasonable in Jarndyce and Jarndyce! Unreason and injusti
and injustice at the heart and at the bottom, unreason and
ning to end—if it ever has an end—how should poor Rick,
it, pluck reason out of it? He no more gathers grapes fro
thistles, than older men did, in old times."

His gentleness and consideration for Richard, whenev
touched me so, that I was always silent on this subject very

"I suppose the Lord Chancellor, and the Vice Chanc
Chancery battery of great guns, would be infinitely astonis
and injustice in one of their suitors," pursued my guar
learned gentlemen begin to raise moss-roses from the pow
wigs, I shall begin to be astonished too!"

He checked himself in glancing towards the window to
was, and leaned on the back of my chair instead.

"Well, well, little woman! To go on, my dear. This

"I think so too," said my guardian. "Less pedigree? Not so much of Morgan-ap—what's his name?"

That was what I meant, I acknowledged; though he was a very harmless person, even when we had had more of him.

"Still, upon the whole, he is as well in his native mountains," said my guardian. "I agree with you. Then, little woman, can I do better for a time than retain Mrs. Woodcourt here?"

No. And yet——

My guardian looked at me, waiting for what I had to say.

I had nothing to say. At least I had nothing in my mind that I could say. I had an undefined impression that it might have been better if we had had some other inmate, but I could hardly have explained why, even to my myself. Or, if to myself, certainly not to anybody else.

"You see," said my guardian, "our neighbourhood is in Woodcourt's way, and he can come here to see her as often as he likes, which is agreeable to them both; and she is familiar to us, and fond of you."

Yes. That was undeniable. I had nothing to say against it. I could not have suggested a better arrangement; but I was not quite easy in my mind. Esther, Esther, why not? Esther, think!

"It is a very good plan indeed, dear Guardian, and we could not do better."

"Sure, little woman?"

Quite sure. I had had a moment's time to think, since I had urged that duty on myself, and I was quite sure.

"Good," said my guardian. "It shall be done. Carried unanimously."

"Carried unanimously," I repeated, going on with my work.

It was a cover for his book-table that I happened to be ornamenting. It had been laid by on the night preceding my sad journey, and never resumed. I showed it to him now, and he admired it highly. After I had explained the pattern to him, and all the great effects that were to come out by-and-by, I thought I would go back to our last theme.

"You said, dear Guardian, when we spoke of Mr. Woodcourt before Ada left us, that you thought he would give a long trial to another country. Have you been advising him since?"

"Yes, little woman; pretty often."

"Has he decided to do so?"

"I rather think not."

"Some other prospect has opened to him, perhaps?" said I.

"Why—yes—perhaps," returned my guardian, beginning his answer in a very deliberate manner. "About half a year hence or so, there is a medical attendant for the poor to be appointed at a certain place in Yorkshire. It is a thriving place, pleasantly situated; streams and streets, town and country, mill and moor; and seems to present an opening for such a man. I mean, a man whose hopes and aims may sometimes lie (as most men's sometimes do, I dare say) above the ordinary level, but to whom the ordinary level will be high enough after all, if it should prove to be a way of usefulness and good service leading to no other. All generous spirits are ambitious, I suppose; but the ambition that calmly trusts itself to such a road, instead of spasmodically trying to fly over it, is of the kind I care for. It is Woodcourt's kind."

"And will he get this appointment?" I asked.

"Why, little woman," returned my guardian, smiling, "not being an oracle, I cannot confidently say; but I think so. His reputation stands very high; there were people from that part of the country in the shipwreck; and, strange to say, I believe the best man has the best chance. You must not suppose it to be a fine

endowment. It is a very, very commonplace affair, my dear; an appointm
a great amount of work and a small amount of pay; but better things will
about it, it may be fairly hoped."

"The poor of that place will have reason to bless the choice, if it falls
Woodcourt, Guardian."

"You are right, little woman; that I am sure they will."

We said no more about it, nor did he say a word about the future of
House. But it was the first time I had taken my seat at his side in my mo
dress, and that accounted for it I considered.

I now began to visit my dear girl every day, in the dull dark corner wh
lived. The morning was my usual time: but whenever I found I had an h
so to spare, I put on my b ed off to Chancery Lane. The
both so glad to see me at used to brighten up so when they
me opening the door and quite at home, I never knocked),
had no fear of becoming t yet.

On these occasions I fre ichard absent. At other times he
be writing, or reading pap e, at that table of his, so covere
papers, which was never di times I would come upon him,
ing at the door of Mr. V Sometimes I would meet him
neighbourhood, lounging his nails. I often met him wa
in Lincoln's Inn, near the id first seen him, O how differe
different!

That the money Ada brought him was melting away with the candles I
see burning after dark in Mr. Vholes's office, I knew very well. It was not
amount in the beginning; he had married in debt; and I could not fail to
stand, by this time, what was meant by Mr. Vholes's shoulder being at the
—as I still heard it was. My dear made the best of housekeepers, and tri
to save; but I knew that they were getting poorer and poorer every day.

She shone in the miserable corner like a beautiful star. She adorned and
it so, that it became another place. Paler than she had been at home, and
quieter than I had thought natural when she was yet so cheerful and hope
face was so unshadowed, that I half believed she was blinded by her l
Richard to his ruinous career.

I went one day to dine with them, while I was under this impression.
turned into Symond's Inn. I met little Miss Flite coming out. She had
make a stately call upon the wards in Jarndyce, as she still called them,
derived the highest gratification from that ceremony. Ada had already
that she called every Monday at five o'clock, with one little extra white
her bonnet, which never appeared there at any other time, and with her
reticule of documents on her arm.

"My dear!" she began. "So delighted! How do you do! So gla
you. And you are going to visit our interesting Jarndyce wards? To b
Our beauty is at home, my dear, and will be charmed to see you."

"Then Richard is not come in yet?" said I. "I am glad of that, fo
afraid of being a little late."

"No, he is not come in," returned Miss Flite. "He has had a long
Court. I left him there, with Vholes. You don't like Vholes, I hope?
like Vholes. Dan-gerous man!"

"I am afraid you see Richard oftener than ever now?" said I.

"My dearest," returned Miss Flite, "daily and hourly. You know wha
you of the attraction on the Chancellor's table? My dear, next to myse
the most constant suitor in Court. He begins quite to amuse our little
Ve-ry friendly little party, are we not?"

It was miserable to hear this from her poor mad lips, though it was no surprise.

"In short, my valued friend," pursued Miss Flite, advancing her lips to my ear, with an air of equal patronage and mystery, "I must tell you a secret. I have made him my executor. Nominated, constituted, and appointed him. In my will. Ye-es."

"Indeed?" said I.

"Ye-es," repeated Miss Flite, in her most genteel accents, "my executor, administrator, and assign. (Our Chancery phrases, my love.) I have reflected that if I should wear out, he will be able to watch that judgment. Being so very regular in his attendance."

It made me sigh to think of him.

"I did at one time mean," said Miss Flite, echoing the sigh, "to nominate, constitute, and appoint poor Gridley. Also very regular, my charming girl. I assure you, most exemplary! But he wore out, poor man, so I have appointed his successor. Don't mention it. This is in confidence."

She carefully opened her reticule a little way, and showed me a folded piece of paper inside, as the appointment of which she spoke.

"Another secret, my dear. I have added to my collection of birds."

"Really, Miss Flite?" said I, knowing how it pleased her to have her confidence received with an appearance of interest.

She nodded several times, and her face became overcast and gloomy. "Two more. I call them the Wards in Jarndyce. They are caged up with all the others. With Hope, Joy, Youth, Peace, Rest, Life, Dust, Ashes, Waste, Want, Ruin, Despair, Madness, Death, Cunning, Folly, Words, Wigs, Rags, Sheepskin, Plunder, Precedent, Jargon, Gammon, and Spinach!"

The poor soul kissed me, with the most troubled look I had ever seen in her; and went her way. Her manner of running over the names of her birds, as if she were afraid of hearing them even from her own lips, quite chilled me.

This was not a cheering preparation for my visit, and I could have dispensed with the company of Mr. Vholes, when Richard (who arrived within a minute or two after me) brought him to share our dinner. Although it was a very plain one, Ada and Richard were for some minutes both out of the room together, helping to get ready what we were to eat and drink. Mr. Vholes took that opportunity of holding a little conversation in a low voice with me. He came to the window where I was sitting, and began upon Symond's Inn.

"A dull place, Miss Summerson, for a life that is not an official one," said Mr. Vholes, smearing the glass with his black glove to make it clearer for me.

"There is not much to see here," said I.

"Nor to hear, miss," returned Mr. Vholes. "A little music does occasionally stray in; but we are not musical in the law, and soon eject it. I hope Mr. Jarndyce is as well as his friends could wish him?"

I thanked Mr. Vholes, and said he was quite well.

"I have not the pleasure to be admitted among the number of his friends myself," said Mr. Vholes, "and I am aware that the gentlemen of our profession are sometimes regarded in such quarters with an unfavourable eye. Our plain course, however, under good report and evil report, and all kinds of prejudice, (we are the victims of prejudice,) is to have everything openly carried on. How do you find Mr. C looking, Miss Summerson?"

"He looks very ill. Dreadfully anxious."

"Just so," said Mr. Vholes.

He stood behind me, with his long black figure reaching nearly to the ceiling of those low rooms; feeling the pimples on his face as if they were ornaments, and

speaking inwardly and evenly as though there were not a human passion or emotion in his nature.

"Mr. Woodcourt is in attendance upon Mr. C, I believe?" he resumed.

"Mr. Woodcourt is his disinterested friend," I answered.

"But I mean in professional attendance, medical attendance."

"That can do little for an unhappy mind," said I.

"Just so," said Mr. Vholes.

So slow, so eager, so bloodless and gaunt, I felt as if Richard were wasting away beneath the eyes of this adviser, and there were something of the Vampire in him.

"Miss Summerson," [illegible] slowly rubbing his gloved hands as if, to his cold sense of [illegible] the same in black kid or out of it, "this was an ill-advised m[illegible]

I begged he would exc[illegible] it. They had been engaged when they were both very yo[illegible] indignantly), and when the prospect before them was m[illegible]. When Richard had not yielded himself to the unhappy [illegible] darkened his life.

"Just so," assented [illegible] ill, with a view to everything being openly carried on, I wi[illegible], Miss Summerson, observe to you that I consider this a ve[illegible] indeed. I owe the opinion, not only to Mr. C's connexio[illegible] would naturally wish to protect myself, but also to my own reputation—dear to myself, as a professional man aiming to keep respectable; dear to my three girls at home, for whom I am striving to realise some little independence; dear, I will even say, to my aged father, whom it is my privilege to support."

"It would become a very different marriage, a much happier and better marriage, another marriage altogether, Mr. Vholes," said I, "if Richard were persuaded to turn his back on the fatal pursuit in which you are engaged with him."

Mr. Vholes, with a noiseless cough—or rather gasp—into one of his black gloves, inclined his head as if he did not wholly dispute even that.

"Miss Summerson," he said, "it may be so; and I freely admit that the young lady who has taken Mr. C's name upon herself in so ill-advised a manner—you will I am sure not quarrel with me for throwing out that remark again, as a duty I owe to Mr. C's connexions—is a highly genteel young lady. Business has prevented me from mixing much with general society, in any but a professional character; still I trust I am competent to perceive that she is a highly genteel young lady. As to beauty, I am not a judge of that myself, and I never did give much attention to it from a boy; but I dare say the young lady is equally eligible in that point of view. She is considered so (I have heard) among the clerks in the Inn, and it is a point more in their way than in mine. In reference to Mr. C's pursuit of his interests——"

"O! His interests, Mr. Vholes!"

"Pardon me," returned Mr. Vholes, going on in exactly the same inward and dispassionate manner. "Mr C takes certain interests under certain wills disputed in the suit. It is a term we use. In reference to Mr. C's pursuit of his interests, I mentioned to you, Miss Summerson, the first time I had the pleasure of seeing you, in my desire that everything should be openly carried on—I used those words, for I happened afterwards to note them in my diary, which is producible at any time—I mentioned to you that Mr. C had laid down the principle of watching his own interests; and that when a client of mine laid down a principle which was not of an immoral (that is to say, unlawful) nature, it devolved upon me to carry it out. I *have* carried it out; I *do* carry it out. But I will not smooth things over, to any connexion of Mr. C's, on any account. As open as I was to Mr. Jarndyce,

ou. I regard it in the light of a professional duty to be so, though it can
d to no one. I openly say, unpalatable as it may be, that I consider Mr.
in a very bad way, that I consider Mr. C himself in a very bad way, and
ard this as an exceedingly ill-advised marriage.—Am I here, sir? Yes,
ou; I am here, Mr. C, and enjoying the pleasure of some agreeable con-
with Miss Summerson, for which I have to thank you very much,

ke off thus, in answer to Richard, who addressed him as he came into the
y this time, I too well understood Mr. Vholes's scrupulous way of saving
id his respectability, not to feel that our worst fears did but keep pace
lient's progress.

down to dinner, and I had an opportunity of observing Richard, anxi-
was not disturbed by Mr. Vholes (who took off his gloves to dine),
sat opposite to me at the small table; for I doubt if, looking up at all,
emoved his eyes from his host's face. I found Richard thin and languid,
n his dress, abstracted in his manner, forcing his spirits now and then,
ier intervals relapsing into a dull thoughtfulness. About his large bright
used to be so merry, there was a wanness and a restlessness that changed
gether. I cannot use the expression that he looked old. There is a ruin
which is not like age; and into such a ruin Richard's youth and youth-
had all fallen away,

little, and seemed indifferent what it was; showed himself to be much
atient than he used to be; and was quick, even with Ada. I thought,
at his old light-hearted manner was all gone; but it shone out of him
s, as I had occasionally known little momentary glimpses of my own old
ok out upon me from the glass. His laugh had not quite left him either;
like the echo of a joyful sound, and that is always sorrowful.

was as glad as ever, in his old affectionate way, to have me there; and
of the old times pleasantly. These did not appear to be interesting to
es, though he occasionally made a gasp which I believe was his smile.
hortly after dinner, and said that with the permission of the ladies he
ire to his office.

ys devoted to business, Vholes!" cried Richard.

Mr. C," he returned, "the interests of clients are never to be neglected,
y are paramount in the thoughts of a professional man like myself, who
preserve a good name among his fellow-practitioners and society at large.
ng myself the pleasure of the present agreeable conversation, may not be
respective of your own interests, Mr. C."

d expressed himself quite sure of that, and lighted Mr. Vholes out. On
he told us, more than once, that Vholes was a good fellow, a safe fel-
n who did what he pretended to do, a very good fellow indeed! He was
about it, that it struck me he had begun to doubt Mr. Vholes.

e threw himself on the sofa, tired out; and Ada and I put things to rights,
ad no other servant than the woman who attended to the chambers. My
ad a cottage piano there, and quietly sat down to sing some of Richard's
; the lamp being first removed into the next room, as he complained of
his eyes.

tween them, at my dear girl's side, and felt very melancholy listening to
voice. I think Richard did too; I think he darkened the room for that
She had been singing some time, rising between whiles to bend over him
to him; when Mr. Woodcourt came in. Then he sat down by Richard;
playfully, half earnestly, quite naturally and easily, found out how he felt,
e he had been all day. Presently he proposed to accompany him to s

forth."

"All true," said Ada; "b
you."

I thought it best to let my c
So I said as much. I said it i

"Esther, my dearest, I war
You shall teach me."

I teach! I said no more; i
keys, and I knew that it was n
something to say to me.

"When I married Richard,
had been perfectly happy for a
trouble or anxiety, so loved and
dear Esther."

"I know, I know, my darling

"When we were married, I h
vince him of his mistake; that h
husband, and not pursue it all
But if I had not had that hope, I
Just the same!"

In the momentary firmness of t
by the utterance of these last wor
mation of her earnest tones.

"You are not to think, my de
fear what you fear. No one can
wisdom that ever lived in the wo
love does."

She spoke so modestly and sof
tation, as it moved to and fro upo

"I see him at his work
change of

breast more eloquent than I have been, with greater power than mine to show him his true course, and win him back."

Her hand stopped now. She clasped me in her arms, and I clasped her in mine.

"If that little creature should fail too, Esther, I still look forward. I look forward a long while, through years and years, and think that then, when I am growing old, or when I am dead perhaps, a beautiful woman, his daughter, happily married, may be proud of him and a blessing to him. Or that a generous brave man, as handsome as he used to be, as hopeful, and far more happy, may walk in the sunshine with him, honouring his grey head, and saying to himself, 'I thank God this is my father! ruined by a fatal inheritance, and restored through me!'"

O, my sweet girl, what a heart was that which beat so fast against me!

"These hopes uphold me, my dear Esther, and I know they will. Though sometimes even they depart from me, before a dread that arises when I look at Richard."

I tried to cheer my darling, and asked her what it was? Sobbing and weeping, she replied:

"That he may not live to see his child."

CHAPTER LXI.

A DISCOVERY.

THE days when I frequented that miserable corner which my dear girl brightened, can never fade in my remembrance. I never see it, and I never wish to see it, now; I have been there only once since; but in my memory there is a mournful glory shining on the place, which will shine for ever.

Not a day passed without my going there, of course. At first I found Mr. Skimpole there, on two or three occasions, idly playing the piano, and talking in his usual vivacious strain. Now, besides my very much mistrusting the probability of his being there without making Richard poorer, I felt as if there were something in his careless gaiety too inconsistent with what I knew of the depths of Ada's life. I clearly perceived, too, that Ada shared my feelings. I therefore resolved, after much thinking of it, to make a private visit to Mr. Skimpole, and try delicately to explain myself. My dear girl was the great consideration that made me bold.

I set off one morning, accompanied by Charley, for Somers Town. As I approached the house, I was strongly inclined to turn back, for I felt what a desperate attempt it was to make an impression on Mr. Skimpole, and how extremely likely it was that he would signally defeat me. However, I thought that being there, I would go through with it. I knocked with a trembling hand at Mr. Skimpole's door—literally with a hand, for the knocker was gone—and after a long parley gained admission from an Irishwoman, who was in the area when I knocked, breaking up the lid of a water-butt with a poker, to light the fire with.

Mr. Skimpole, lying on the sofa in his room, playing the flute a little, was enchanted to see me. Now, who should receive me, he asked? Who would I prefer for mistress of the ceremonies? Would I have his Comedy daughter, his Beauty daughter, or his Sentiment daughter? Or would I have all the daughters at once, in a perfect nosegay?

I replied, half defeated already, that I wished to speak to himself only, if he would give me leave.

pursue the subject.

"I should think it a mistake," thought Miss Summerson capabl

"Mr. Skimpole," said I, raisir that you are unacquainted with th

"Meaning our three banking-h D ?" said Mr. Skimpole, brightly.

"—That, perhaps," I went on, I think you ought most seriously t

"Dear me!" said Mr. Skimpol

"And in very embarrassed circu

"Parallel case, exactly!" said M

"This at present naturally cause is less anxious when no claims are one uneasiness always heavy on his of saying that—if you would—not—

I was coming to the point with gr and, with a radiant face and in the

"Not go there? Certainly not, n Why *should* I go there? When I anywhere for pain, because I was m wants me. Now, I have had very li your practical sagacity demonstrates poetry which was once so captivatin wants pounds.' So I am; I alway tradespeople always want them of n becoming mercenary, 'this is the m which I did. I always borrow pou (which is much to be regretted), deg to me. Why should I go to see the

Through

He finished by genially kissing my hand, and thanking me. Nothing but Miss Summerson's fine tact, he said, would have found this out for him.

I was much disconcerted; but I reflected that if the main point were gained, it mattered little how strangely he perverted everything leading to it. I had determined to mention something else, however, and I thought I was not to be put off in that.

"Mr. Skimpole," said I, "I must take the liberty of saying, before I conclude my visit, that I was much surprised to learn, on the best authority, some little time ago, that you knew with whom that poor boy left Bleak House, and that you accepted a present on that occasion. I have not mentioned it to my guardian, for I fear it would hurt him unnecessarily; but I may say to you that I was much surprised."

"No? Really surprised, my dear Miss Summerson?" he returned, inquiringly, raising his pleasant eyebrows.

"Greatly surprised."

He thought about it for a little while, with a highly agreeable and whimsical expression of face; then quite gave it up, and said, in his most engaging manner:

"You know what a child I am. Why surprised?"

I was reluctant to enter minutely into that question; but as he begged I would, for he was really curious to know, I gave him to understand, in the gentlest words I could use, that his conduct seemed to involve a disregard of several moral obligations. He was much amused and interested when he heard this, and said, "No, really?" with ingenuous simplicity.

"You know I don't intend to be responsible. I never could do it. Responsibility is a thing that has always been above me—or below me," said Mr. Skimpole, "I don't even know which; but, as I understand the way in which my dear Miss Summerson (always remarkable for her practical good sense and clearness) puts this case, I should imagine it was chiefly a question of money, do you know?"

I incautiously gave a qualified assent to this.

"Ah! Then you see," said Mr. Skimpole, shaking his head, "I am hopeless of understanding it."

I suggested, as I rose to go, that it was not right to betray my guardian's confidence for a bribe.

"My dear Miss Summerson," he returned, with a candid hilarity that was all his own, "I can't be bribed."

"Not by Mr. Bucket?" said I.

"No," said he. "Not by anybody. I don't attach any value to money. I don't care about it, I don't know about it, I don't want it, I don't keep it—it goes away from me directly. How can *I* be bribed?"

I showed that I was of a different opinion, though I had not the capacity for arguing the question.

"On the contrary," said Mr. Skimpole, "I am exactly the man to be placed in a superior position, in such a case as that. I am above the rest of mankind, in such a case as that. I can act with philosophy, in such a case as that. I am not warped by prejudices, as an Italian baby is by bandages. I am as free as the air. I feel myself as far above suspicion as Cæsar's wife."

Anything to equal the lightness of his manner, and the playful impartiality with which he seemed to convince himself, as he tossed the matter about like a ball of feathers, was surely never seen in anybody else!

"Observe the case, my dear Miss Summerson. Here is a boy received into the house and put to bed, in a state that I strongly object to. The boy being in bed, a man arrives—like the house that Jack built. Here is the man who demands

energy and great subtlety be
friends and enemies for us wh
we are robbed, avenges us con
officer and intelligent man ha
in money; he finds it very u
Shall I shake that faith in Bu
blunt one of Bucket's weapo
detective operation? And aga
it is blameable in Bucket to
because he is the knowing mar
Skimpole deems it essential, it
that he *should* think well of
Bucket. And he does. And t

I had nothing to offer in repl
Mr. Skimpole, however, who
returning home attended only b
self. He entertained me, on th
and assured me, at parting, that
had found that out for him about

As it so happened that I neve
what I know of his history. A
based principally on the foregoi
garded my guardian's entreaties
to Richard. His being heavily
their separation. He died some
with letters and other materials
showed him to have been the v
against an amiable child. It wa
read more of it myself than the s
the book. It was this. "I am
known, to the

more worn and haggard, haunted the Court day after day; listlessly sat there the whole day long, when he knew there was no remote chance of the suit being mentioned; and became one of the stock sights of the place. I wonder whether any of the gentlemen remembered him as he was when he first went there.

So completely was he absorbed in his fixed idea, that he used to avow in his cheerful moments, that he should never have breathed the fresh air now "but for Woodcourt." It was only Mr. Woodcourt who could occasionally divert his attention, for a few hours at a time; and rouse him, even when he sunk into a lethargy of mind and body that alarmed us greatly, and the returns of which became more frequent as the months went on. My dear girl was right in saying that he only pursued his errors the more desperately for her sake. I have no doubt that his desire to retrieve what he had lost, was rendered the more intense by his grief for his young wife, and became like the madness of a gamester.

I was there, as I have mentioned, at all hours. When I was there at night, I generally went home with Charley in a coach; sometimes my guardian would meet me in the neighbourhood, and we would walk home together. One evening he had arranged to meet me at eight o'clock. I could not leave, as I usually did, quite punctually at the time, for I was working for my dear girl, and had a few stitches more to do, to finish what I was about; but it was within a few minutes of the hour, when I bundled up my little work-basket, gave my darling my last kiss for the night, and hurried down-stairs. Mr. Woodcourt went with me, as it was dusk.

When we came to the usual place of meeting—it was close by, and Mr. Woodcourt had often accompanied me before—my guardian was not there. We waited half an hour, walking up and down; but there were no signs of him. We agreed that he was either prevented from coming, or that he had come, and gone away; and Mr. Woodcourt proposed to walk home with me.

It was the first walk we had ever taken together, except that very short one to the usual place of meeting. We spoke of Richard and Ada the whole way. I did not thank him, in words, for what he had done—my appreciation of it had risen above all words then—but I hoped he might not be without some understanding of what I felt so strongly.

Arriving at home and going up-stairs, we found that my guardian was out, and that Mrs. Woodcourt was out too. We were in the very same room into which I had brought my blushing girl, when her youthful lover, now her so altered husband, was the choice of her young heart; the very same room, from which my guardian and I had watched them going away through the sunlight, in the fresh bloom of their hope and promise.

We were standing by the opened window, looking down into the street, when Mr. Woodcourt spoke to me. I learned in a moment that he loved me. I learned in a moment that my scarred face was all unchanged to him. I learned in a moment that what I had thought was pity and compassion, was devoted, generous, faithful love. O, too late to know it now, too late, too late. That was the first ungrateful thought I had. Too late.

"When I returned," he told me, "when I came back, no richer than when I went away, and found you newly risen from a sick bed, yet so inspired by sweet consideration for others, and so free from a selfish thought——"

"O, Mr. Woodcourt, forbear, forbear!" I entreated him. "I do not deserve your high praise. I had many selfish thoughts at that time, many!"

"Heaven knows, beloved of my life," said he, "that my praise is not a lover's praise, but the truth. You do not know what all around you see in Esther Summerson, how many hearts she touches and awakens, what sacred admiration and what love she wins."

"O, Mr. Woodcourt," cried I, "it is a great thing to win love, it is a
thing to win love! I am proud of it, and honoured by it; and the heart
causes me to shed these tears of mingled joy and sorrow—joy that I have
sorrow that I have not deserved it better; but I am not free to think of yo

I said it with a stronger heart; for when he praised me thus, and when
his voice thrill with his belief that what he said was true, I aspired to b
worthy of it. It was not too late for that. Although I closed this unforesee
in my life to-night, I could be worthier of it all through my life. And it
comfort to me, and an impulse to me, and I felt a dignity rise up within
was derived from him, when I thought so.

He broke the

"I should poo... have in the dear one who will ev
be as dear to me — rnestness with which he said it,
strengthened me after her assurance that she is
to think of my le her, let me only tell you that th
idea of you whic ted to the Heavens when I came
I have always he n I seemed to stand in any ray o
fortune, to tell y red that I should tell it you in vai
hopes and fears: I distress you. I have said eno

Something see ce that was like the Angel he th
me, and I felt so sorrowfu... had sustained! I wished to he
in his trouble, as I had wished to do when he showed that first commis
for me.

"Dear Mr. Woodcourt," said I, "before we part to-night, something
for me to say. I never could say it as I wish—I never shall—but——"

I had to think again of being more deserving of his love, and his affe
before I could go on.

"—I am deeply sensible of your generosity, and I shall treasure its remem
to my dying hour. I know full well how changed I am. I know you ar
unacquainted with my history, and I know what a noble love that is which
faithful. What you have said to me, could have affected me so much from no
lips; for there are none that could give it such a value to me. It shall not b
It shall make me better."

He covered his eyes with his hand, and turned away his head. How c
ever be worthy of those tears?

"If, in the unchanged intercourse we shall have together—in tending R
and Ada; and I hope in many happier scenes of life—you ever find anyth
me which you can honestly think is better than it used to be, believe that
have sprung up from to-night, and that I shall owe it to you. And never be
dear dear Mr. Woodcourt, never believe that I forget this night: or that wh
heart be its, it can be insensible to the pride and joy of having been beloved by

He took my hand, and kissed it. He was like himself again, and I fel
more encouraged.

"I am induced, by what you said just now," said I, "to hope that you
succeeded in your endeavour?"

"I have," he answered. "With such help from Mr. Jarndyce, as you who
him so well can imagine him to have rendered me, I have succeeded."

"Heaven bless him for it," said I, giving him my hand; "and Heaven bles
in all you do!"

"I shall do it better for the wish," he answered; "it will make me ent
these new duties, as on another sacred trust from you."

"Ah! Richard!" I exclaimed involuntarily, "what will he do when yo
gone!"

"I am not required to go yet; I would not desert him, dear Miss Summerson, even if I were."

One other thing I felt it needful to touch upon, before he left me. I knew that I should not be worthier of the love I could not take, if I reserved it.

"Mr. Woodcourt," said I, you will be glad to know from my lips before I say Good night, that in the future, which is clear and bright before me, I am most happy, most fortunate, have nothing to regret or desire."

It was indeed a glad hearing to him, he replied.

"From my childhood I have been," said I, "the object of the untiring goodness of the best of human beings; to whom I am so bound by every tie of attachment, gratitude, and love, that nothing I could do in the compass of a life could express the feelings of a single day."

"I share those feelings," he returned; "You speak of Mr. Jarndyce."

"You know his virtues well," said I, "but few can know the greatness of his character as I know it. All its highest and best qualities have been revealed to me in nothing more brightly, than in the shaping out of that future in which I am so happy. And if your highest homage and respect had not been his already,—which I know they are,—they would have been his, I think, on this assurance, and in the feeling it would have awakened in you towards him for my sake."

He fervently replied, that indeed indeed they would have been. I gave him my hand again.

"Good night," I said; "Good-bye."

"The first, until we meet to-morrow; the second, as a farewell to this theme between us for ever?"

"Yes."

"Good night; good-bye!"

He left me, and I stood at the dark window watching the street. His love, in all its constancy and generosity, had come so suddenly upon me, that he had not left me a minute when my fortitude gave way again, and the street was blotted out by my rushing tears.

But they were not tears of regret and sorrow. No. He had called me the beloved of his life, and had said I would be evermore as dear to him as I was then; and I felt as if my heart would not hold the triumph of having heard those words. My first wild thought had died away. It was not too late to hear them, for it was not too late to be animated by them to be good, true, grateful, and contented. How easy my path; how much easier than his!

CHAPTER LXII.

ANOTHER DISCOVERY.

I HAD not the courage to see any one that night. I had not even the courage to see myself, for I was afraid that my tears might a little reproach me. I went up to my room in the dark, and prayed in the dark, and lay down in the dark to sleep. I had no need of any light to read my guardian's letter by, for I knew it by heart. I took it from the place where I kept it, and repeated its contents by its own clear light of integrity and love, and went to sleep with it on my pillow.

I was up very early in the morning, and called Charley to come for a walk. We bought flowers for the breakfast-table, and came back and arranged them, and were as busy as possible. We were so early, that I had good time still for

Charley's lesson, before breakfast; Charley (who was not in the leas
in the old defective article of grammar) came through it with great app
we were altogether very notable. When my guardian appeared, he sa
little woman, you look fresher than your flowers!" And Mrs. Wo
peated and translated a passage from the Mewlinwillinwodd, expres
being like a mountain with the sun upon it.

This was all so pleasant, that I hope it made me still more like th
than I had been before. After breakfast, I waited my opportunity, a
about a little, until I saw my guardian in his own room—the room of l
by himself. Then I made an excuse to go in with my housekeeping ke
the door after me.

"Well, Dame Durden?" said my guardian; the post had brought
letters, and he was writing. "You want money?"

"No, indeed, I have plenty in hand."

"There never was such a Dame Durden," said my guardian, "
money last."

He had laid down his pen, and leaned back in his chair looking at m
often spoken of his bright face, but I thought I had never seen it loo
and good. There was a high happiness upon it, which made me think
been doing some great kindness this morning.

"There never was," said my guardian, musing as he smiled upon m
Dame Durden for making money last."

He had never yet altered his old manner. I loved it, and him, so
when I now went up to him and took my usual chair, which was alway
side—for sometimes I read to him, and sometimes I talked to him, and
I silently worked by him—I hardly liked to disturb it by laying my h
breast. But I found I did not disturb it at all.

"Dear Guardian," said I, "I want to speak to you. Have I been rem
thing?"

"Remiss in anything, my dear?"

"Have I not been what I have meant to be, since—I brought the
your letter, Guardian?"

"You have been everything I could desire, my love."

"I am very glad indeed to hear that," I returned. "You know, y
me, was this the mistress of Bleak House? And I said, yes."

"Yes," said my guardian, nodding his head. He had put his arm
as if there were something to protect me from; and looked in my face.

"Since then," said I, "we have never spoken on the subject except
"And then I said, Bleak House was thinning fast; and so it was, my
"And *I* said," I timidly reminded him, "but its mistress remained."

He still held me, in the same protecting manner, and with the sa
goodness in his face.

"Dear Guardian," said I, "I know how you have felt all that has
and how considerate you have been. As so much time has passed, a
spoke only this morning of my being so well again, perhaps you exp
renew the subject. Perhaps I ought to do so. I will be the mistress
House when you please."

"See," he returned gaily, "what a sympathy there must be betwe
have had nothing else, poor Rick excepted—it's a large exception—in
When you came in, I was full of it. When shall we give Bleak
mistress, little woman?"

"When you please."

"Next month?"

"Next month, dear Guardian."

"The day on which I take the happiest and best step of my life—the day on which I shall be a man more exulting and more enviable than any other man in the world—the day on which I give Bleak House its little mistress—shall be next month, then," said my guardian.

I put my arms round his neck and kissed him, just as I had done on the day when I brought my answer.

A servant came to the door to announce Mr. Bucket, which was quite unnecessary, for Mr. Bucket was already looking in over the servant's shoulder. "Mr. Jarndyce and Miss Summerson," said he, rather out of breath, "with all apologies for intruding, *will* you allow me to order up a person that's on the stairs, and that objects to being left there in case of becoming the subject of observations in his absence? Thank you. Be so good as chair that there Member in this direction, will you?" said Mr. Bucket, beckoning over the banisters.

This singular request produced an old man in a black skull-cap, unable to walk, who was carried up by a couple of bearers, and deposited in the room near the door. Mr. Bucket immediately got rid of the bearers, mysteriously shut the door, and bolted it.

"Now you see, Mr. Jarndyce," he then began, putting down his hat, and opening his subject with a flourish of his well-remembered finger, "you know me, and Miss Summerson knows me. This gentleman likewise knows me, and his name is Smallweed. The discounting line is his line principally, and he's what you may call a dealer in bills. That's about what *you* are, you know, ain't you?" said Mr. Bucket, stopping a little to address the gentleman in question, who was exceedingly suspicious of him.

He seemed about to dispute this designation of himself, when he was seized with a violent fit of coughing.

"Now, Moral, you know!" said Mr. Bucket, improving the accident. "Don't you contradict when there ain't no occasion, and you won't be took in that way. Now, Mr. Jarndyce, I address myself to you. I've been negotiating with this gentleman on behalf of Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet; and one way and another I've been in and out and about his premises a deal. His premises are the premises formerly occupied by Krook, Marine Store Dealer—a relation of this gentleman's, that you saw in his life-time, if I don't mistake?"

My guardian replied "Yes."

"Well! You are to understand," said Mr. Bucket, "that this gentleman he come into Krook's property, and a good deal of Magpie property there was. Vast lots of waste paper among the rest. Lord bless you, of no use to nobody!"

The cunning of Mr. Bucket's eye, and the masterly manner in which he contrived, without a look or a word against which his watchful auditor could protest, to let us know that he stated the case according to previous agreement, and could say much more of Mr. Smallweed if he thought it advisable, deprived us of any merit in quite understanding him. His difficulty was increased by Mr. Smallweed's being deaf as well as suspicious, and watching his face with the closest attention.

"Among them odd heaps of old papers, this gentleman, when he comes into the property, naturally begins to rummage, don't you see?" said Mr. Bucket.

"To which? Say that again," cried Mr. Smallweed, in a shrill, sharp voice.

"To rummage," repeated Mr. Bucket. "Being a prudent man, and accustomed to take care of your own affairs, you begin to rummage among the papers as you have come into; don't you?"

"Of course I do," cried Mr. Smallweed.

"Of course you do," said Mr. Bucket, conversationally, "and much to [illegible]

you would be if you didn't. And so you chance to find, you know," Mr. Bucket went on, stooping over him with an air of cheerful raillery which Mr. Smallweed by no means reciprocated, "and so you chance to find, you know, a paper, with the signature of Jarndyce to it. Don't you?"

Mr. Smallweed glanced with a troubled eye at us, and grudgingly nodded assent.

"And coming to look at that paper, at your full leisure and convenience—all is good time, for you're not curious to read it, and why should you be?—what do you find it to be but a Will, you see. That's the drollery of it," said Mr. Bucket, with the same lively air of recalling a joke for the enjoyment of Mr. Smallweed, who still had the same crest- [illegible] enjoying it at all; "what do you find it to be, but a Wil[illegible]

"I don't know tha[illegible] as anything else," snarled Mr. Smallweed.

Mr. Bucket eyed the [illegible] he had slipped and shrunk down in his chair into a mere [illegible] ach disposed to pounce upon him; nevertheless, he cont[illegible] the same agreeable air, keeping the corner of one of [illegible]

"Notwithstanding [illegible] you get a little doubtful and uncomfortable in your mi[illegible] tender mind of your own."

"Eh? What do yo[illegible] n?" asked Mr. Smallweed, with his hand to his ear.

"A very tender mind."

"Ho! Well, go on," said Mr. Smallweed.

"And as you've heard a good deal mentioned regarding a celebrated Chancery Will case, of the same name; and as you know what a card Krook was for buying all manner of old pieces of furniter, and books, and papers, and what not, and never liking to part with 'em, and always a-going to teach himself to read; you begin to think—and you never was more correct in your born days—'Ecod, if I don't look about me, I may get into trouble regarding this Will.'"

"Now, mind how you put it, Bucket," cried the old man anxiously, with his hand at his ear. "Speak up; none of your brimstone tricks. Pick me up; I want to hear better. O Lord, I am shaken to bits!"

Mr. Bucket had certainly picked him up at a dart. However, as soon as he could be heard through Mr. Smallweed's coughing, and his vicious ejaculations of "O my bones! O dear! I've no breath in my body! I'm worse than the chattering, clattering, brimstone pig at home!" Mr. Bucket proceeded in the same convivial manner as before.

"So, as I happen to be in the habit of coming about your premises, you take me into your confidence, don't you?"

I think it would be impossible to make an admission with more ill-will, and a worse grace, than Mr. Smallweed displayed when he admitted this; rendering it perfectly evident that Mr. Bucket was the very last person he would have thought of taking into his confidence, if he could by any possibility have kept him out of it.

"And I go into the business with you,—very pleasant we are over it; and I confirm you in your well-founded fears, that you will-get-yourself-in-to-a-most precious line if you don't come out with that there Will," said Mr. Bucket, emphatically; "and accordingly you arrange with me that it shall be delivered up to this present Mr. Jarndyce, on no conditions. If it should prove to be valuable, you trusting yourself to him for your reward; that's about where it is, ain't it?"

"That's what was agreed," Mr. Smallweed assented, with the same bad grace.

"In consequence of which," said Mr. Bucket, dismissing his agreeable manner

all at once, and becoming strictly business-like, "you've got that Will upon your person at the present time; and the only thing that remains for you to do is, just to Out with it!"

Having given us one glance out of the watching corner of his eye, and having given his nose one triumphant rub with his forefinger, Mr. Bucket stood with his eyes fastened on his confidential friend, and his hand stretched forth ready to take the paper and present it to my guardian. It was not produced without much reluctance, and many declarations on the part of Mr. Smallweed that he was a poor industrious man, and that he left it to Mr. Jarndyce's honour not to let him lose by his honesty. Little by little, he very slowly took from a breast-pocket a stained discoloured paper, which was much singed upon the outside, and a little burnt at the edges, as if it had long ago been thrown upon a fire, and hastily snatched off again. Mr. Bucket lost no time in transferring this paper, with the dexterity of a conjuror, from Mr. Smallweed to Mr. Jarndyce. As he gave it to my guardian, he whispered behind his fingers:

"Hadn't settled how to make their market of it. Quarrelled and hinted about it. I laid out twenty pound upon it. First, the avaricious grandchildren split upon him, on account of their objections to his living so unreasonably long, and then they split on one another. Lord! there ain't one of the family that wouldn't sell the other for a pound or two, except the old lady—and she's only out of it because she's too weak in her mind to drive a bargain."

"Mr. Bucket," said my guardian aloud, "whatever the worth of this paper may be to any one, my obligations are great to you; and if it be of any worth, I hold myself bound to see Mr. Smallweed remunerated accordingly."

"Not according to your merits, you know," said Mr. Bucket, in friendly explanation to Mr. Smallweed. "Don't you be afraid of that. According to its value."

"That is what I mean," said my guardian. "You may observe, Mr. Bucket, that I abstain from examining this paper myself. The plain truth is, I have forsworn and abjured the whole business these many years, and my soul is sick of it. But Miss Summerson and I will immediately place the paper in the hands of my solicitor in the cause, and its existence shall be made known without delay to all other parties interested."

"Mr. Jarndyce can't say fairer than that, you understand," observed Mr. Bucket, to his fellow-visitor. "And it being now made clear to you that nobody 's a-going to be wronged—which must be a great relief to *your* mind—we may proceed with the ceremony of chairing you home again."

He unbolted the door, called in the bearers, wished us good morning, and with a look full of meaning, and a crook of his finger at parting, went his way.

We went our way too, which was to Lincoln's Inn, as quickly as possible. Mr. Kenge was disengaged; and we found him at his table in his dusty room, with the inexpressive-looking books, and the piles of papers. Chairs having been placed for us by Mr. Guppy, Mr. Kenge expressed the surprise and gratification he felt at the unusual sight of Mr. Jarndyce in his office. He turned over his double eye-glass as he spoke, and was more Conversation Kenge than ever.

"I hope," said Mr. Kenge, "that the genial influence of Miss Summerson," he bowed to me, "may have induced Mr. Jarndyce," he bowed to him, "to forego some little of his animosity towards a Cause and towards a Court which are —shall I say, which take their place in the stately vista of the pillars of our profession?"

"I am inclined to think," returned my guardian, "that Miss Summerson has seen too much of the effects of the Court and the Cause to exert any influence in their favour. Nevertheless, they are a part of the occasion of my being here. Mr.

Kenge, before I lay this paper on your desk, and have done with it, let me tell you how it has come into my hands."

He did so shortly and distinctly.

"It could not, sir," said Mr. Kenge, "have been stated more plainly and to the purpose, if it had been a case at law."

"Did you ever know English law, or equity either, plain and to the purpose?" said my guardian.

"O fie!" said Mr. Kenge.

At first he had not seemed to attach much importance to the paper, but when he saw it he appeared more interested, and when he had opened and read a little of it through his eye-glass, h... "Mr. Jarndyce," he said, looking off it, "you have perus...

"Not I!" returned my g...

"But, my dear sir," said K... Will of later date than any in the suit. It appears to be a... ...ndwriting. It is duly executed and attested. And even if intended... ...lled, as might possibly be supposed to be denoted by these marks ... ...*or* cancelled. Here it is, a perfect instrument!"

"Well!" said my guardian. "W... ...me?"

"Mr. Guppy!" cried Mr. Kenge, ...ice.—"I beg your pardon, Mr. Jarndyce."

"Sir."

"Mr. Vholes of Symond's Inn. My compliments. Jarndyce and Jarndyce. Glad to speak with him."

Mr. Guppy disappeared.

"You ask me what is this to you, Mr. Jarndyce. If you had perused the document, you would have seen that it reduces your interest considerably, but still leaving it a very handsome one, still leaving it a very handsome one," said Mr. Kenge, waving his hand persuasively and blandly. "You would further have seen, that the interests of Mr. Richard Carstone, and of Miss Ada Clare now Mrs. Richard Carstone, are very materially advanced by it."

"Kenge," said my guardian, "if all the flourishing wealth that the suit brought into this vile court of Chancery could fall to my two young cousins, I should be well contented. But do you ask *me* to believe that any good is to come of Jarndyce and Jarndyce?"

"O really, Mr. Jarndyce! Prejudice, prejudice. My dear sir, this is a very great country, a very great country. Its system of equity is a very great system, a very great system. Really, really!"

My guardian said no more, and Mr. Vholes arrived. He was modestly impressed by Mr. Kenge's professional eminence.

"How do you do, Mr. Vholes? Will you be so good as to take a chair here by me, and look over this paper?"

Mr. Vholes did as he was asked, and seemed to read it every word. He was not excited by it; but he was not excited by anything. When he had well examined it, he retired with Mr. Kenge into a window, and shading his mouth with his black glove, spoke to him at some length. I was not surprised to observe Mr. Kenge inclined to dispute what he said before he had said much, for I knew that no two people ever did agree about anything in Jarndyce and Jarndyce. But he seemed to get the better of Mr. Kenge too, in a conversation that sounded as if it were almost composed of the words, "Receiver-General," "Accountant-General," "Report," "Estate," and "Costs." When they had finished, they came back to Mr. Kenge's table, and spoke aloud.

"Well! But this is a very remarkable document, Mr. Vholes?" said Mr. Kenge.

Mr. Vholes said, "Very much so."

"And a very important document, Mr. Vholes?" said Mr. Kenge.

Again Mr. Vholes said, "Very much so."

"And as you say, Mr. Vholes, when the Cause is in the paper next Term, this document will be an unexpected and interesting feature in it," said Mr. Kenge, looking loftily at my guardian.

Mr. Vholes was gratified, as a smaller practitioner striving to keep respectable, to be confirmed in any opinion of his own by such an authority.

"And when," asked my guardian, rising after a pause, during which Mr. Kenge had rattled his money, and Mr. Vholes had picked his pimples, "when is next Term?"

"Next Term, Mr. Jarndyce, will be next month," said Mr. Kenge. "Of course we shall at once proceed to do what is necessary with this document, and to collect the necessary evidence concerning it; and of course you will receive our usual notification of the Cause being in the paper."

"To which I shall pay, of course, my usual attention."

"Still bent, my dear sir," said Mr. Kenge, showing us through the outer office to the door, "still bent, even with your enlarged mind, on echoing a popular prejudice? We are a prosperous community, Mr. Jarndyce, a very prosperous community. We are a great country, Mr. Jarndyce, we are a very great country. This is a great system, Mr. Jarndyce, and would you wish a great country to have a little system? Now, really, really!"

He said this at the stair-head, gently moving his right hand as if it were a silver trowel, with which to spread the cement of his words on the structure of the system, and consolidate it for a thousand ages.

CHAPTER LXIII.

STEEL AND IRON.

GEORGE'S shooting-gallery is to let, and the stock is sold off, and George himself is at Chesney Wold, attending on Sir Leicester in his rides, and riding very near his bridle-rein, because of the uncertain hand with which he guides his horse. But not to-day is George so occupied. He is journeying to-day into the iron country farther north, to look about him.

As he comes into the iron country farther north, such fresh green woods as those of Chesney Wold are left behind; and coalpits and ashes, high chimneys and red bricks, blighted verdure, scorching fires, and a heavy never-lightening cloud of smoke, become the features of the scenery. Among such objects rides the trooper, looking about him, and always looking for something he has come to find.

At last, on the black canal bridge of a busy town, with a clang of iron in it, and more fires and more smoke than he has seen yet, the trooper, swart with the dust of the coal roads, checks his horse, and asks a workman does he know the name of Rouncewell thereabouts?

"Why, master," quoth the workman, "do I know my own name?"

"'Tis so well known here, is it, comrade?" asks the trooper.

"Rouncewells? Ah! you're right."

"And where might it be now?" asks the trooper, with a glance before him.

"The bank, the factory, or the house?" the workman wants to know.

"Hum! Rouncewells is so great apparently," mutters the trooper, stroking his chin, "that I have as good as half a mind to go back again. Why, I don't know which I want. Should I find Mr. Rouncewell at the factory, do you think?"

"Tain't easy to say where you'd find him—at this time of the day you might find either him or his son there, if he's in town; but his contracts take him away."

And which is the factory? Why, he sees those chimneys—the tallest ones! Yes, he sees *them*. Well! let him keep his eye on those chimneys, going on as straight as ever he can, and presently he'll see 'em down a turning on the left, shut in by a great brick wall which forms one side of the street. That's Rouncewells.

The trooper thanks his [illegible] owly on, looking about him. He does not turn back, bu[illegible] l is much disposed to groom him too) at a public-house w[illegible] l's hands are dining, as the ostler tells him. Some of R[illegible] ust knocked off for dinner time, and seem to be invadin[illegible] y are very sinewy and strong, me Rouncewell's hands—[illegible]

He comes to a gate[illegible] ks in, and sees a great perplexity of iron lying about, in [illegible] st variety of shapes; in bars, in wedges, in sheets; in t[illegible], in wheels, in cogs, in cranks, in rails; twisted and wrenc[illegible] erverse forms, as separate parts of machinery; mountains of [illegible] ty in its age; distant furnaces of it glowing and bubbling in its youth; origin fireworks of it showering about, under the blows of the steam hammer; red-hot iron, white-hot iron, cold-black iron; an iron taste, an iron smell, and a Babel of iron sounds.

"This is a place to make a man's head ache, too!" says the trooper, looking about him for a counting-house. "Who comes here? This is very like me before I was set up. This ought to be my nephew, if likenesses run in families. Your servant, sir."

"Yours, sir. Are you looking for any one?"

"Excuse me. Young Mr. Rouncewell, I believe?"

"Yes."

"I was looking for your father, sir. I wish to have a word with him."

The young man, telling him he is fortunate in his choice of a time, for his father is there, leads the way to the office where he is to be found. "Very like me before I was set up—devilish like me!" thinks the trooper, as he follows. They come to a building in the yard; with an office on an upper floor. At sight of the gentleman in the office, Mr. George turns very red.

"What name shall I say to my father?" asks the young man.

George, full of the idea of iron, in desperation answers "Steel," and is so presented. He is left alone with the gentleman in the office, who sits at a table with account-books before him, and some sheets of paper, blotted with hosts of figures and drawings of cunning shapes. It is a bare office, with bare windows, looking on the iron view below. Tumbled together on the table are some pieces of iron, purposely broken to be tested, at various periods of their service, in various capacities. There is iron-dust on everything; and the smoke is seen, through the windows, rolling heavily out of the tall chimneys, to mingle with the smoke from a vaporous Babylon of other chimneys.

"I am at your service, Mr. Steel," says the gentleman, when his visitor has taken a rusty chair.

"Well, Mr. Rouncewell," George replies, leaning forward with his left arm on his knee, and his hat in his hand; and very chary of meeting his brother's eye: "I am not without my expectations, that in the present visit I may prove to be more free than welcome. I have served as a Dragoon in my day; and a comrade

of mine that I was once rather partial to, was, if I don't deceive myself, a brother of yours. I believe you had a brother who gave his family some trouble, and ran away, and never did any good but in keeping away?"

"Are you quite sure," returns the ironmaster, in an altered voice, "that your name is Steel?"

The trooper falters, and looks at him. His brother starts up, calls him by his name, and grasps him by both hands.

"You are too quick for me!" cries the trooper, with the tears springing out of his eyes. "How do you do, my dear old fellow? I never could have thought you would have been half so glad to see me as all this. How do you do, my dear old fellow, how do you do!"

They shake hands, and embrace each other, over and over again; the trooper still coupling his "How do you do, my dear old fellow!" with his protestation that he never thought his brother would have been half so glad to see him as all this!

"So far from it," he declares, at the end of a full account of what has preceded his arrival there, "I had very little idea of making myself known. I thought, if you took by any means forgivingly to my name, I might gradually get myself up to the point of writing a letter. But I should not have been surprised, brother, if you had considered it anything but welcome news to hear of me."

"We will show you at home what kind of news we think it, George," returns his brother. "This is a great day at home, and you could not have arrived, you bronzed old soldier, on a better. I make an agreement with my son Watt to-day, that on this day twelvemonth he shall marry as pretty and as good a girl as you have seen in all your travels. She goes to Germany to-morrow with one of your nieces, for a little polishing up in her education. We make a feast of the event, and you will be made the hero of it."

Mr. George is so entirely overcome at first by this prospect, that he resists the proposed honour with great earnestness. Being overborne, however, by his brother and his nephew—concerning whom he renews his protestations that he never could have thought they would have been half so glad to see him—he is taken home to an elegant house, in all the arrangements of which there is to be observed a pleasant mixture of the originally simple habits of the father and mother, with such as are suited to their altered station and the higher fortunes of their children. Here Mr. George is much dismayed by the graces and accomplishments of his nieces that are; and by the beauty of Rosa, his niece that is to be; and by the affectionate salutations of these young ladies, which he receives in a sort of dream. He is surely taken aback, too, by the dutiful behaviour of his nephew; and has a woful consciousness upon him of being a scapegrace. However, there is great rejoicing, and a very hearty company, and infinite enjoyment; and Mr. George comes bluff and martial through it all; and his pledge to be present at the marriage and give away the bride, is received with universal favour. A whirling head has Mr. George that night when he lies down in the state-bed of his brother's house, to think of all these things, and to see the images of his nieces (awful all the evening in their floating muslins), waltzing, after the German manner, over his counterpane.

The brothers are closeted next morning in the ironmaster's room; where the elder is proceeding, in his clear sensible way, to show how he thinks he may best dispose of George in his business, when George squeezes his hand and stops him.

"Brother, I thank you a million times for your more than brotherly welcome, and a million times more to that for your more than brotherly intentions. But my plans are made. Before I say a word as to them, I wish to consult you upon one

family point. How," says the trooper, folding his arms, and looking with indomitable firmness at his brother, "how is my mother to be got to scratch me?"

"I am not sure that I understand you, George," replies the ironmaster.

"I say, brother, how is my mother to be got to scratch me? She must be got to do it, somehow."

"Scratch you out of her will, I think you mean?"

"Of course I do. In short," says the trooper, folding his arms more resolutely yet, "I mean—*to*—scratch me!"

"My dear George," returns his brother, "is it so indispensable that you should undergo that process?"

"Quite! Absolutely [illegible] of the meanness of coming back without it. I should ne[illegible] again. I have not sneaked home to rob your children, i[illegible] of your rights. I, who forfeited mine long ago! If I a[illegible]p my head, I must be scratched. Come. You are a man[illegible]ion and intelligence, and you can tell me how it's to be [illegible]

"I can tell you, Ge[illegible]ter, deliberately, "how it is not to be brought about, wh[illegible]e purpose as well. Look at our mother, think of her, [illegible]he recovered you. Do you believe there is a consideration [illegible]ld induce her to take such a step against her favourite sc[illegible]e is any chance of her consent, to balance against the outrage it would be to her (loving dear old lady!) to propose it? If you do, you are wrong. No, George! You must make up your mind to remain *un*scratched. I think," there is an amused smile on the ironmaster's face, as he watches his brother, who is pondering, deeply disappointed; "I think you may manage almost as well as if the thing were done, though."

"How, brother?"

"Being bent upon it, you can dispose by will of anything you have the misfortune to inherit, in any way you like, you know."

"That's true!" says the trooper, pondering again. Then he wistfully asks, with his hand on his brother's, "Would you mind mentioning that, brother, to your wife and family?"

"Not at all."

"Thank you. You wouldn't object to say, perhaps, that although an undoubted vagabond, I am a vagabond of the harum scarum order, and not of the mean sort?"

The ironmaster, repressing his amused smile, assents.

"Thank you. Thank you. It's a weight off my mind," says the trooper, with a heave of his chest as he unfolds his arms, and puts a hand on each leg; "though I had set my heart on being scratched, too!"

The brothers are very like each other, sitting face to face; but a certain massive simplicity, and absence of usage in the ways of the world, is all on the trooper's side.

"Well," he proceeds, throwing off his disappointment, "next and last, those plans of mine. You have been so brotherly as to propose to me to fall in here, and take my place among the products of your perseverance and sense. I thank you heartily. It's more than brotherly, as I said before; and I thank you heartily for it," shaking him a long time by the hand. "But the truth is, brother, I am a—I am a kind of a Weed, and it's too late to plant me in a regular garden."

"My dear George," returns the elder, concentrating his strong steady brow upon him, and smiling confidently; "leave that to me, and let me try."

George shakes his head. "You could do it, I have not a doubt, if anybody

could; but it's not to be done. Not to be done, sir! Whereas it so falls out, on the other hand, that I am able to be of some trifle of use to Sir Leicester Dedlock since his illness—brought on by family sorrows; and that he would rather have that help from our mother's son than from anybody else."

"Well, my dear George," returns the other, with a very slight shade upon his open face, "if you prefer to serve in Sir Leicester Dedlock's household brigade——"

"There it is, brother," cries the trooper, checking him, with his hand upon his knee again: "there it is! You don't take kindly to that idea; I don't mind it. You are not used to being officered; I am. Everything about you is in perfect order and discipline; everything about me requires to be kept so. We are not accustomed to carry things with the same hand, or to look at 'em from the same point. I don't say much about my garrison manners, because I found myself pretty well at my ease last night, and they wouldn't be noticed here, I dare say, once and away. But I shall get on best at Chesney Wold—where there's more room for a Weed than there is here; and the dear old lady will be made happy besides. Therefore I accept of Sir Leicester Dedlock's proposals. When I come over next year to give away the bride, or whenever I come, I shall have the sense to keep the household brigade in ambuscade, and not to manœuvre it on your ground. I thank you heartily again, and am proud to think of the Rouncewells as they'll be founded by you."

"You know yourself, George," says the elder brother, returning the grip of his hand, "and perhaps you know me better than I know myself. Take your way. So that we don't quite lose one another again, take your way."

"No fear of that!" returns the trooper. "Now, before I turn my horse's head homewards, brother, I will ask you—if you'll be so good—to look over a letter for me. I brought it with me to send from these parts, as Chesney Wold might be a painful name just now to the person it's written to. I am not much accustomed to correspondence myself, and I am particular respecting this present letter, because I want it to be both straightforward and delicate."

Herewith he hands a letter, closely written in somewhat pale ink but in a neat round hand, to the ironmaster, who reads as follows:

"Miss Esther Summerson,

"A communication having been made to me by Inspector Bucket of a letter to myself being found among the papers of a certain person, I take the liberty to make known to you that it was but a few lines of instruction from abroad, when, where, and how to deliver an enclosed letter to a young and beautiful lady, then unmarried in England. I duly observed the same.

"I further take the liberty to make known to you, that it was got from me as a proof of handwriting only, and that otherwise I would not have given it up as appearing to be the most harmless in my possession, without being previously shot through the heart.

"I further take the liberty to mention, that if I could have supposed a certain unfortunate gentleman to have been in existence, I never could and never would have rested until I had discovered his retreat, and shared my last farthing with him, as my duty and my inclination would have equally been. But he was (officially) reported drowned, and assuredly went over the side of a transport-ship at night in an Irish harbour, within a few hours of her arrival from the West Indies, as I have myself heard both from officers and men on board, and know to have been (officially) confirmed.

"I further take the liberty to state that in my humble quality as one of the rank and file, I am, and shall ever continue to be, your thoroughly devoted and admiring servant, and that I esteem the qualities you possess above all others, far beyond the limits of the present dispatch.

"I have the honour to be,

"George."

"A little formal," observes the elder brother, refolding it with a puzzled face.

"But nothing that might not be sent to a pattern young lady?" asks the younger.

"Nothing at all."

Therefore it is sealed, and deposited for posting among the iron correspondence of the day. This done, Mr. George takes a hearty farewell of the family party, and prepares to saddle and mount. His brother, however, unwilling to part

with him so soon, proposes to ride with him in a light open carriage to the place where he will bait for the night, and there remain with him until morning: a servant riding, for so much of the journey, on the thorough-bred old grey from Chesney Wold. The offer being gladly accepted, is followed by a pleasant ride, a pleasant dinner, and a pleasant breakfast, all in brotherly communion. Then they once more shake hands long and heartily, and part; the ironmaster turning his face to the smoke and fires, and the trooper to the green country. Early in the afternoon, the subdued sound of his heavy military trot is heard on the turf in the avenue, as he rides on with imaginary clank and jingle of accoutrements under the old elm trees.

XIV.

TIVE.

Soon after I had had t[illegible] y guardian, he put a sealed paper in my hand one morning, [illegible]r next month, my dear." I found in it two hundred poun[illegible]

I now began very quiet[illegible] rations as I thought were necessary. Regulating my purchases by my guardian's taste, which I knew very well of course, I arranged my wardrobe to please him, and hoped I should be highly successful. I did it all so quietly, because I was not quite free from my old apprehension that Ada would be rather sorry, and because my guardian was so quiet himself. I had no doubt that under all the circumstances we should be married in the most private and simple manner. Perhaps I should only have to say to Ada, "Would you like to come and see me married to-morrow, my pet?" Perhaps our wedding might even be as unpretending as her own, and I might not find it necessary to say anything about it until it was over. I thought that if I were to choose, I would like this best.

The only exception I made was Mrs. Woodcourt. I told her that I was going to be married to my guardian, and that we had been engaged some time. She highly approved. She could never do enough for me; and was remarkably softened now, in comparison with what she had been when we first knew her. There was no trouble she would not have taken to have been of use to me: but I need hardly say that I only allowed her to take as little as gratified her kindness without tasking it.

Of course this was not a time to neglect my guardian; and of course it was not a time for neglecting my darling. So I had plenty of occupation—which I was glad of; and as to Charley, she was absolutely not to be seen for needlework. To surround herself with great heaps of it—baskets full and tables full—and do little, and spend a great deal of time in staring with her round eyes at what there was to do, and persuade herself that she was going to do it, were Charley's great dignities and delights.

Meanwhile, I must say, I could not agree with my guardian on the subject of the Will, and I had some sanguine hopes of Jarndyce and Jarndyce. Which of us was right will soon appear, but I certainly did encourage expectations. In Richard, the discovery gave occasion for a burst of business and agitation that buoyed him up for a little time; but he had lost the elasticity even of hope now, and seemed to me to retain only its feverish anxieties. From something my guardian said one day, when we were talking about this, I understood that my marriage would not take place until after the Term-time we had been told to look forward

to; and I thought the more, for that, how rejoiced I should be if I could be married when Richard and Ada were a little more prosperous.

The Term was very near indeed, when my guardian was called out of town, and went down into Yorkshire on Mr. Woodcourt's business. He had told me beforehand that his presence there would be necessary. I had just come in one night from my dear girl's, and was sitting in the midst of all my new clothes, looking at them all around me, and thinking, when a letter from my guardian was brought to me. It asked me to join him in the country; and mentioned by what stage-coach my place was taken, and at what time in the morning I should have to leave town. It added in a postscript that I would not be many hours from Ada.

I expected few things less than a journey at that time, but I was ready for it in half-an-hour, and set off as appointed early next morning. I travelled all day, wondering all day what I could be wanted for at such a distance; now I thought it might be for this purpose, and now I thought it might be for that purpose; but I was never, never, never near the truth.

It was night when I came to my journey's end, and found my guardian waiting for me. This was a great relief, for towards evening I had begun to fear (the more so as his letter was a very short one) that he might be ill. However, there he was, as well as it was possible to be; and when I saw his genial face again at its brightest and best, I said to myself he has been doing some other great kindness. Not that it required much penetration to say that, because I knew that his being there at all was an act of kindness.

Supper was ready at the hotel, and when we were alone at table he said:

"Full of curiosity, no doubt, little woman, to know why I have brought you here?"

"Well, Guardian," said I, "without thinking myself a Fatima, or you a Blue Beard, I am a little curious about it."

"Then to ensure your night's rest, my love," he returned, gaily, "I won't wait until to-morrow to tell you. I have very much wished to express to Woodcourt, somehow, my sense of his humanity to poor unfortunate Jo, his inestimable services to my young cousins, and his value to us all. When it was decided that he should settle here, it came into my head that I might ask his acceptance of some unpretending and suitable little place, to lay his own head in. I therefore caused such a place to be looked out for, and such a place was found on very easy terms, and I have been touching it up for him and making it habitable. However, when I walked over it the day before yesterday, and it was reported ready, I found that I was not housekeeper enough to know whether things were all as they ought to be. So I sent off for the best little housekeeper that could possibly be got, to come and give me her advice and opinion. And here she is," said my guardian, "laughing and crying both together!"

Because he was so dear, so good, so admirable. I tried to tell him what I thought of him, but I could not articulate a word.

"Tut, tut!" said my guardian. "You make too much of it, little woman. Why how you sob, Dame Durden, how you sob!"

"It is with exquisite pleasure, Guardian—with a heart full of thanks."

"Well, well," said he. "I am delighted that you approve. I thought you would. I meant it as a pleasant surprise for the little mistress of Bleak House."

I kissed him, and dried my eyes. "I know now!" said I. "I have seen this in your face a long while."

"No; have you really, my dear?" said he. "What a Dame Durden it is to read a face!"

He was so quaintly cheerful that I could not long be otherwise, and was almost ashamed of having been otherwise at all. When I went to bed, I cried. I am

bound to confess that I cried; but I hope it was with pleasure, though I am not quite sure it was with pleasure. I repeated every word of the letter twice over.

A most beautiful summer morning succeeded; and after breakfast we went out arm in arm, to see the house of which I was to give my mighty housekeeping opinion. We entered a flower-garden by a gate in a side wall, of which he had the key; and the first thing I saw, was, that the beds and flowers were all laid out according to the manner of my beds and flowers at home.

"You see, my dear," observed my guardian, standing still, with a delighted face, to watch my looks; "knowing there could be no better plan, I borrowed yours."

We went on by a pretty little orchard, where the cherries were nestling among the green leaves, and the shadows of the apple-trees were sporting on the grass, to the house itself,—a cottage, quite a rustic cottage of doll's rooms; but such a lovely place, so tranquil and so beautiful, with such a rich and smiling country spread around it; with water sparkling away into the distance, here all overhung with summer-growth, there turning a humming mill; at its nearest point glancing through a meadow by the cheerful town, where cricket-players were assembling in bright groups, and a flag was flying from a white tent that rippled in the sweet west wind. And still, as we went through the pretty rooms, out at the little rustic verandah doors, and underneath the tiny wooden colonnades, garlanded with woodbine, jasmine, and honeysuckle, I saw, in the papering on the walls, in the colours of the furniture, in the arrangement of all the pretty objects, *my* little tastes and fancies, *my* little methods and inventions which they used to laugh at while they praised them, my odd ways everywhere.

I could not say enough in admiration of what was all so beautiful, but one secret doubt arose in my mind, when I saw this. I thought, O would he be the happier for it! Would it not have been better for his peace that I should not have been so brought before him? Because, although I was not what he thought me, still he loved me very dearly, and it might remind him mournfully of what he believed he had lost. I did not wish him to forget me,—perhaps he might not have done so, without these aids to his memory,—but my way was easier than his, and I could have reconciled myself even to that, so that he had been the happier for it.

"And now, little woman," said my guardian, whom I had never seen so proud and joyful as in showing me these things, and watching my appreciation of them, "now, last of all, for the name of this house."

"What is it called, dear Guardian?"

"My child," said he, "come and see."

He took me to the porch, which he had hitherto avoided, and said, pausing before we went out:

"My dear child, don't you guess the name?"

"No!" said I.

We went out of the porch; and he showed me written over it, BLEAK HOUSE.

He led me to a seat among the leaves close by, and sitting down beside me, and taking my hand in his, spoke to me thus:

"My darling girl, in what there has been between us, I have, I hope, been really solicitous for your happiness. When I wrote you the letter to which you brought the answer," smiling as he referred to it, "I had my own too much in view; but I had yours too. Whether, under different circumstances, I might ever have renewed the old dream I sometimes dreamed when you were very young, of making you my wife one day, I need not ask myself. I did renew it, and I wrote my letter, and you brought your answer. You are following what I say, my child?"

I was cold, and I trembled violently; but not a word he uttered was lost. As I sat looking fixedly at him, and the sun's rays descended, softly shining through

the leaves, upon his bare head, I felt as if the brightness on him must be like the brightness of the Angels.

"Hear me, my love, but do not speak. It is for me to speak now. When it was that I began to doubt whether what I had done would really make you happy, is no matter. Woodcourt came home, and I soon had no doubt at all."

I clasped him round the neck, and hung my head upon his breast, and wept. "Lie lightly, confidently, here, my child," said he, pressing me gently to him. "I am your guardian and your father now. Rest confidently here."

Soothingly, like the gentle rustling of the leaves; and genially, like the ripening weather; and radiantly and beneficently, like the sunshine; he went on.

"Understand me, my dear girl. I had no doubt of your being contented and happy with me, being so dutiful and so devoted; but I saw with whom you would be happier. That I penetrated his secret when Dame Durden was blind to it, is no wonder; for I knew the good that could never change in her, better far than she did. Well! I have long been in Allan Woodcourt's confidence, although he was not, until yesterday, a few hours before you came here, in mine. But I would not have my Esther's bright example lost; I would not have a jot of my dear girl's virtues unobserved and unhonoured; I would not have her admitted on sufferance into the line of Morgan ap Kerrig, no, not for the weight in gold of all the mountains in Wales!"

He stopped to kiss me on the forehead, and I sobbed and wept afresh. For I felt as if I could not bear the painful delight of his praise.

"Hush, little woman! Don't cry; this is to be a day of joy. I have looked forward to it," he said, exultingly, "for months on months! A few words more, Dame Trot, and I have said my say. Determined not to throw away one atom of my Esther's worth, I took Mrs. Woodcourt into a separate confidence. 'Now, madam,' said I, 'I clearly perceive—and indeed I know, to boot—that your son loves my ward. I am further very sure that my ward loves your son, but will sacrifice her love to a sense of duty and affection, and will sacrifice it so completely, so entirely, so religiously, that you should never suspect it, though you watched her night and day.' Then I told her all our story—ours—yours and mine. 'Now, madam,' said I, 'come you, knowing this, and live with us. Come you, and see my child from hour to hour; set what you see, against her pedigree, which is this, and this'—for I scorned to mince it—'and tell me what is the true legitimacy, when you shall have quite made up your mind on that subject.' Why, honour to her old Welsh blood, my dear!" cried my guardian, with enthusiasm, "I believe the heart it animates beats no less warmly, no less admiringly, no less lovingly, towards Dame Durden, than my own!"

He tenderly raised my head, and as I clung to him, kissed me in his old fatherly way again and again. What a light, now, on the protecting manner I had thought about!

"One more last word. When Allan Woodcourt spoke to you, my dear, he spoke with my knowledge and consent—but I gave him no encouragement, not I, for these surprises were my great reward, and I was too miserly to part with a scrap of it. He was to come, and tell me all that passed; and he did. I have no more to say. My dearest, Allan Woodcourt stood beside your father when he lay dead—stood beside your mother. This is Bleak House. This day I give this house its little mistress; and before God, it is the brightest day in all my life!"

He rose, and raised me with him. We were no longer alone. My husband—I have called him by that name full seven happy years now—stood at my side.

"Allan," said my guardian, "take from me a willing gift, the best wife that ever man had. What more can I say for you, than that I know you deserve her! Take with her the little home she brings you. You know what she will make it, Allan;

you know what she has made its namesake. Let me share its felicity sometimes, and what do I sacrifice? Nothing, nothing."

He kissed me once again; and now the tears were in his eyes, as he said more softly:

"Esther, my dearest, after so many years, there is a kind of parting in this too. I know that my mistake has caused you some distress. Forgive your old guardian, in restoring him to his old place in your affections; and blot it out of your memory. Allan, take my dear."

He moved away from under the green roof of leaves, and stopping in the sunlight outside, and turning cheerfully towards us, said:

"I shall be found about here somewhere. It's a West wind, little woman, the West! Let no one th… am going to revert to my bachelor habits, and if anybod… g, I'll run away, and never come back!"

What happiness … , what rest, what hope, what gratitude, what bliss! … ore the month was out; but when we were to come an… n house, was to depend on Richard and Ada.

We all three went … As soon as we arrived in town, Allan went straight t… ry our joyful news to him and my darling. Late as it was, I … for a few minutes before lying down to sleep: but I went home with my guardian first, to make his tea for him, and to occupy the old chair by his side; for I did not like to think of its being empty so soon.

When we came home, we found that a young man had called three times in the course of that one day, to see me; and that, having been told, on the occasion of his third call, that I was not expected to return before ten o'clock at night, he had left word, "that he would call about then." He had left his card three times. MR. GUPPY.

As I naturally speculated on the object of these visits, and as I always associated something ludicrous with the visitor, it fell out that in laughing about Mr. Guppy I told my guardian of his old proposal, and his subsequent retractation. "After that," said my guardian, "we will certainly receive this hero." So, instructions were given that Mr. Guppy should be shown in, when he came again; and they were scarcely given when he did come again.

He was embarrassed when he found my guardian with me, but recovered himself, and said, "How de do, sir?"

"How do you do, sir?" returned my guardian.

"Thank you, sir, I am tolerable," returned Mr. Guppy. "Will you allow me to introduce my mother, Mrs. Guppy of the Old Street Road, and my particular friend, Mr. Weevle. That is to say, my friend has gone by the name of Weevle, but his name is really and truly Jobling."

My guardian begged them to be seated, and they all sat down.

"Tony," said Mr. Guppy to his friend, after an awkward silence. "Will you open the case?"

"Do it yourself," returned the friend, rather tartly.

"Well, Mr. Jarndyce, sir," Mr. Guppy, after a moment's consideration, began: to the great diversion of his mother, which she displayed by nudging Mr. Jobling with her elbow, and winking at me in a most remarkable manner; "I had an idea that I should see Miss Summerson by herself, and was not quite prepared for your esteemed presence. But Miss Summerson has mentioned to you, perhaps, that something has passed between us on former occasions?"

Summerson," returned my guardian smiling, "has made a communication
ect to me."
" said Mr. Guppy, "makes matters easier. Sir, I have come out of my
Kenge and Carboy's, and I believe with satisfaction to all parties. I am
tted (after undergoing an examination that's enough to badger a man
hing a pack of nonsense that he don't want to know) on the roll of attor-
have taken out my certificate, if it would be any satisfaction to you to

you, Mr. Guppy," returned my guardian. "I am quite willing—I
use a legal phrase—to admit the certificate."
ppy therefore desisted from taking something out of his pocket, and
without it.
no capital myself, but my mother has a little property which takes the
annuity;" Here Mr. Guppy's mother rolled her head as if she never
iciently enjoy the observation, and put her handkerchief to her mouth,
winked at me; "and a few pounds for expenses out of pocket in con-
siness, will never be wanting, free of interest, which is an advantage,
," said Mr. Guppy, feelingly.
inly an advantage," returned my guardian.
some connexion," pursued Mr. Guppy, "and it lays in the direction of
quare, Lambeth. I have therefore taken a ouse in that locality, which,
nion of my friends, is a hollow bargain (taxes ridiculous, and use of fix-
ded in the rent), and intend setting up professionally for myself there,
"
r. Guppy's mother fell into an extraordinary passion of rolling her head,
g waggishly at anybody who would look at her.
six-roomer, exclusive of kitchens," said Mr. Guppy, "and in the opinion
nds, a commodious tenement. When I mention my friends, I refer prin-
my friend Jobling, who I believe has known me," Mr. Guppy looked at
a sentimental air, "from boyhood's hour?"
bling confirmed this with a sliding movement of his legs.
iend Jobling will render me his assistance in the capacity of clerk, and
the ouse," said Mr. Guppy. "My mother will likewise live in the ouse,
present quarter in the Old Street Road shall have ceased and expired;
quently there will be no want of society. My friend Jobling is naturally
e by taste; and besides being acquainted with the movements of the
cles, fully backs me in the intentions I am now developing."
bling said "certainly," and withdrew a little from the elbow of Mr.
nother.
I have no occasion to mention to you, sir, you being in the confidence
ummerson," said Mr. Guppy, "(mother, I wish you'd be so good as to
), that Miss Summerson's image was formerly imprinted on my art, and
de her a proposal of marriage."
I have heard," returned my guardian.
mstances," pursued Mr. Guppy, "over which I had no control but quite
ry, weakened the impression of that image for a time. At which time
merson's conduct was highly genteel; I may even add, magnanimous."
rdian patted me on the shoulder, and seemed much amused.
sir," said Mr. Guppy, "I have got into that state of mind myself, that I
reciprocity of magnanimous behaviour. I wish to prove to Miss Sum-
hat I can rise to a heighth, of which perhaps she hardly thought me
I find that the image which I did suppose had been eradicated from my
eradicated. Its influence over me is still tremendous; and yielding to it

I am willing to overlook the circumstances over which none of us have ha
control, and to new those proposals to Miss Summerson which I had the h
to make at a fe her period. I beg to lay the ouse in Walcot Square, the ho
and myself, he- e Miss Summerson for her acceptance."

"Very n nimous indeed, sir," observed my guardian.

"Well, I plied Mr. Guppy, with candour, "my wish is to be magnani
I do not consid that in making this offer to Miss Summerson, I am by any
throwing m away; neither is that the opinion of my friends. Still,
are circums which I submit may be taken into account as a set off a
any little di- cks of mine, and so a fair and equitable balance arrived at.

"I take upon myself, sir," said my guardian, laughing as he rang the bel
reply to your Summerson. She is very sensi
your handsome good evening, and wishes you
"Oh!" said look. "Is that tantamount,
acceptance, or
"To decide returned my guardian.
Mr. Guppy l iend, and at his mother who sa
turned very ang the ceiling.
"Indeed?" if you was the friend you rep
yourself, I sho y mother out of the gangway, i
of allowing he wanted."

But Mrs. Guppy positively ... ne out of the gangway. She wo
hear of it. "Why, get along with you," said she to my guardian, "what
mean? Ain't my son good enough for you? You ought to be ashan
yourself. Get out with you!"

"My good lady!" returned my guardian, "it is hardly reasonable to ask
get out of my own room."

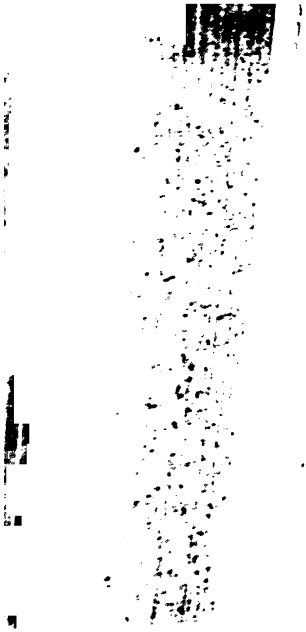
"I don't care for that," said Mrs. Guppy. "Get out with you. If we
good enough for you, go and procure somebody that is good enough. Go
and find 'em."

I was quite unprepared for the rapid manner in which Mrs. Guppy's
of jocularity merged into a power of taking the profoundest offence.

"Go along and find somebody that's good enough for you," repeated
Guppy. "Get out!" Nothing seemed to astonish Mr. Guppy's moth
much, and to make her so very indignant, as our not getting out. "Why
you get out?" said Mrs. Guppy. "What are you stopping here for?"

"Mother," interposed her son, always getting before her, and pushin
back with one shoulder, as she sidled at my guardian, "will you hold
tongue?"

"No, William," she returned; "I won't! Not unless he gets out. I wor
However, Mr. Guppy and Mr. Jobling together closed on Mr. Guppy's m
who began to be quite abusive, and took her, very much against her will, d
stairs; her voice rising a stair higher every time her figure got a stair lower
insisting that we should immediately go and find somebody who was
enough for us, and above all things that we should get out.



CHAPTER LXV.

BEGINNING THE WORLD.

THE term had commenced, and my guardian found an intimation from Mr. Kenge that the Cause would come on in two days. As I had sufficient hopes of the Will to be in a flutter about it, Allan and I agreed to go down to the Court that morning. Richard was extremely agitated, and was so weak and low, though his illness was still of the mind, that my dear girl indeed had sore occasion to be supported. But she looked forward—a very little way now—to the help that was to come to her, and never drooped.

It was at Westminster that the Cause was to come on. It had come on there, I dare say, a hundred times before, but I could not divest myself of an idea that it *might* lead to some result now. We left home directly after breakfast, to be at Westminster Hall in good time; and walked down there through the lively streets—so happily and strangely it seemed!—together.

As we were going along, planning what we should do for Richard and Ada, I heard somebody calling "Esther! My dear Esther! Esther!" And there was Caddy Jellyby, with her head out of the window of a little carriage which she hired now to go about in to her pupils (she had so many), as if she wanted to embrace me at a hundred yards' distance. I had written her a note to tell her of all that my guardian had done, but had not had a moment to go and see her. Of course we turned back; and the affectionate girl was in that state of rapture, and was so overjoyed to talk about the night when she brought me the flowers, and was so determined to squeeze my face (bonnet and all) between her hands, and go on in a wild manner altogether, calling me all kinds of precious names, and telling Allan I had done I don't know what for her, that I was just obliged to get into the little carriage and calm her down, by letting her say and do exactly what she liked. Allan, standing at the window, was as pleased as Caddy; and I was as pleased as either of them; and I wonder that I got away as I did, rather than that I came off, laughing, and red, and anything but tidy, and looking after Caddy, who looked after us out of the coach-window as long as she could see us.

This made us some quarter of an hour late, and when we came to Westminster Hall, we found that the day's business was begun. Worse than that, we found such an unusual crowd in the Court of Chancery that it was full to the door, and we could neither see nor hear what was passing within. It appeared to be something droll, for occasionally there was a laugh, and a cry of "Silence!" It appeared to be something interesting, for every one was pushing and striving to get nearer. It appeared to be something that made the professional gentlemen very merry, for there were several young counsellors in wigs and whiskers on the outside of the crowd, and when one of them told the others about it, they put their hands in their pockets, and quite doubled themselves up with laughter, and went stamping about the pavement of the hall.

We asked a gentleman by us, if he knew what cause was on? He told us Jarndyce and Jarndyce. We asked him if he knew what was doing in it? He said, really no he did not, nobody ever did; but as well as he could make out, it was over. Over for the day? we asked him. No, he said; over for good.

Over for good!

When we heard this unaccountable answer, we looked at one another quite lost in amazement. Could it be possible that the Will had set things right at last,

and that Richard and Ada were going to be rich? It seemed too good to be true. Also it was!

One suspense was short; for a break up soon took place in the crowd, and the people came streaming out looking flushed and hot, and bringing a quantity of lead air with them. Still they were all exceedingly amused, and were more like people coming out from a Fiere or a Juggler than from a court of Justice. We stood aside, watching for any countenance we knew; and presently great bundles of paper began to be carried out—bundles in bags, bundles too large to be got into any bags, immense masses of papers of all shapes and no shapes, which the bearers staggered under, and threw down for the time being, anyhow, on the Hall pavement, while they went back to bring out more. Even these clerks were laughing. We glanced at the papers, and seeing Jarndyce and Jarndyce everywhere, asked an official-looking person who was standing in the midst of them, whether the cause was over. "Yes," he said; "it was all up with it at last!" and burst out laughing too.

At this juncture, we perceived Mr. Kenge coming out of Court with an affable dignity upon him, listening to Mr. Vholes, who was deferential, and carried his own bag. Mr. Vholes was the first to see us. "Here is Miss Summerson, sir," he said. "And Mr. Woodcourt."

"I indeed! Yes. Truly!" said Mr. Kenge, raising his hat to me with polished politeness. "How do you do? Glad to see you. Mr. Jarndyce is not here?"

No. He never came there, I reminded him.

"Really," returned Mr. Kenge, "it is as well that he is not here to-day, for his—shall I say, in my good friend's absence, his indomitable singularity of opinion?—might have been strengthened, perhaps; not reasonably, but might have been strengthened."

"Pray what has been done to-day?" asked Allan.

"I beg your pardon?" said Mr. Kenge, with excessive urbanity.

"What has been done to-day?"

"What has been done," repeated Mr. Kenge. "Quite so. Yes. Why, not much has been done; not much. We have been checked—brought up suddenly, I would say—upon the—shall I term it threshold?"

"Is this Will considered a genuine document, sir?" said Allan; "will you tell us that?"

"Most certainly, if I could," said Mr. Kenge; "but we have not gone into that, we have not gone into that."

"We have not gone into that," repeated Mr. Vholes, as if his low inward voice were an echo.

"You are to reflect, Mr. Woodcourt," observed Mr. Kenge, using his silver trowel, persuasively and smoothingly, "that this has been a great cause, that this has been a protracted cause, that this has been a complex cause. Jarndyce and Jarndyce has been termed, not inaptly, a Monument of Chancery practice."

"And Patience has sat upon it a long time," said Allan.

"Very well indeed, sir," returned Mr. Kenge, with a certain condescending laugh he had. "Very well! You are further to reflect, Mr. Woodcourt," becoming dignified almost to severity, "that on the numerous difficulties, contingencies, masterly fictions, and forms of procedure in this great cause, there has been expended study, ability, eloquence, knowledge, intellect, Mr. Woodcourt, high intellect. For many years, the—a—I would say the flower of the Bar, and the—a—I would presume to add, the matured autumnal fruits of the Woolsack—have been lavished upon Jarndyce and Jarndyce. If the public have the benefit, and if the country have the adornment, of this great Grasp, it must be paid for in money or money's worth, sir."

"Mr. Kenge," said Allan, appearing enlightened all in a moment. "Excuse me, our time presses. Do I understand that the whole estate is found to have been absorbed in costs?"

"Hem! I believe so," returned Mr. Kenge. "Mr. Vholes, what do *you* say?"

"I believe so," said Mr. Vholes.

"And that thus the suit lapses and melts away?"

"Probably," returned Mr. Kenge. "Mr. Vholes?"

"Probably," said Mr. Vholes.

"My dearest life," whispered Allan, "this will break Richard's heart!"

There was such a shock of apprehension in his face, and he knew Richard so perfectly, and I too had seen so much of his gradual decay, that what my dear girl had said to me in the fulness of her foreboding love, sounded like a knell in my ears.

"In case you should be wanting Mr. C, sir," said Mr. Vholes, coming after us, "you'll find him in Court. I left him there resting himself a little. Good day, sir; good day, Miss Summerson." As he gave me that slowly devouring look of his, while twisting up the strings of his bag, before he hastened with it after Mr. Kenge, the benignant shadow of whose conversational presence he seemed afraid to leave, he gave one gasp as if he had swallowed the last morsel of his client, and his black buttoned-up unwholesome figure glided away to the low door at the end of the Hall.

"My dear love," said Allan, "leave to me, for a little while, the charge you gave me. Go home with this intelligence, and come to Ada's by-and-by!"

I would not let him take me to a coach, but entreated him to go to Richard without a moment's delay, and leave me to do as he wished. Hurrying home, I found my guardian, and told him gradually with what news I had returned. "Little woman," said he, quite unmoved for himself, "to have done with the suit on any terms is a greater blessing than I had looked for. But my poor young cousins!"

We talked about them all the morning, and discussed what it was possible to do. In the afternoon, my guardian walked with me to Symond's Inn, and left me at the door. I went up-stairs. When my darling heard my footsteps, she came out into the small passage and threw her arms round my neck; but she composed herself directly, and said that Richard had asked for me several times. Allan had found him sitting in the corner of the Court, she told me, like a stone figure. On being roused, he had broken away, and made as if he would have spoken in a fierce voice to the Judge. He was stopped by his mouth being full of blood, and Allan had brought him home.

He was lying on a sofa with his eyes closed, when I went in. There were restoratives on the table; the room was made as airy as possible, and was darkened, and was very orderly and quiet. Allan stood behind him, watching him gravely. His face appeared to me to be quite destitute of colour, and now that I saw him without his seeing me I fully saw, for the first time, how worn away he was. But he looked handsomer than I had seen him look for many a day.

I sat down by his side in silence. Opening his eyes by-and-by, he said, in a weak voice, but with his old smile, "Dame Durden, kiss me, my dear!"

It was a great comfort and surprise to me, to find him in his low state cheerful and looking forward. He was happier, he said, in our intended marriage, than he could find words to tell me. My husband had been a guardian angel to him and Ada, and he blessed us both, and wished us all the joy that life could yield us. I almost felt as if my own heart would have broken, when I saw him take my husband's hand, and hold it to his breast.

— behind him, but he held on
I looked to Allan for advice, told him. My guardian saw w laid his hand on Richard's. ' you are a good man!" and bur

My guardian, the picture of a hand on Richard's.

"My dear Rick," said he, "th We can see now. We were all b And how are you, my dear boy?"

"I am very weak, sir, but I hc world."

"Aye, truly; well said!" cried

"I will not begin it in the old have learned a lesson now, sir. indeed, that I have learned it."

"Well, well," said my guardian,

"I was thinking, sir," resumed should so much like to see as the house. If I could be removed there as if I should get well there, sooner t

"Why, so have I been thinking, woman likewise; she and I have be husband won't object. What do yo

Richard smiled; and lifted up h head of the couch.

"I say nothing of Ada," said Ric of her very much. Look at her, ! sc she has so much need to rest upon i

He clasped her in his arms, and n and she looked upon m

"W

put a lock of it to his lips. (I think he vowed within himself to cherish her if she were left alone.)

"It was a troubled dream?" said Richard, clasping both my guardian's hands eagerly.

"Nothing more, Rick; nothing more."

"And you, being a good man, can pass it as such, and forgive and pity the dreamer, and be lenient and encouraging when he wakes?"

"Indeed I can. What am I but another dreamer, Rick?"

"I will begin the world!" said Richard, with a light in his eyes.

My husband drew a little nearer towards Ada, and I saw him solemnly lift up his hand to warn my guardian.

"When shall I go from this place, to that pleasant country where the old times are, where I shall have strength to tell what Ada has been to me, where I shall be able to recall my many faults and blindnesses, where I shall prepare myself to be a guide to my unborn child?" said Richard. "When shall I go?"

"Dear Rick, when you are strong enough," returned my guardian.

"Ada, my darling!"

He sought to raise himself a little. Allan raised him so that she could hold him on her bosom: which was what he wanted.

"I have done you many wrongs, my own. I have fallen like a poor stray shadow on your way, I have married you to poverty and trouble, I have scattered your means to the winds. You will forgive me all this, my Ada, before I begin the world?"

A smile irradiated his face, as she bent to kiss him. He slowly laid his face down upon her bosom, drew his arms closer round her neck, and with one parting sob began the world. Not this world, O not this! The world that sets this right.

When all was still, at a late hour, poor crazed Miss Flite came weeping to me, and told me she had given her birds their liberty.

CHAPTER LXVI.

DOWN IN LINCOLNSHIRE.

THERE is a hush upon Chesney Wold in these altered days, as there is upon a portion of the family history. The story goes, that Sir Leicester paid some who could have spoken out, to hold their peace; but it is a lame story, feebly whispering and creeping about, and any brighter spark of life it shows soon dies away. It is known for certain that the handsome Lady Dedlock lies in the mausoleum in the park, where the trees arch darkly overhead, and the owl is heard at night making the woods ring; but whence she was brought home, to be laid among the echoes of that solitary place, or how she died, is all mystery. Some of her old friends, principally to be found among the pearly-cheeked charmers with the skeleton throats, did once occasionally say, as they toyed in a ghastly manner with large fans—like charmers reduced to flirting with grim Death, after losing all their other beaux—did once occasionally say, when the World assembled together, that they wondered the ashes of the Dedlocks, entombed in the mausoleum, never rose against the profanation of her company. But the dead-and-gone Dedlocks take it very calmly, and have never been known to object.

Up from among the fern in the hollow, and winding by the bridle-road among

the trees, comes sometimes to this lonely spot the sound of horses' hoofs. They may be seen Sir Leicester—invalided, bent, and almost blind, but of worthy presence yet—riding with a stalwart man beside him, constant to his bridle-rein. When they come to a certain spot before the mausoleum-door, Sir Leicester's accustomed horse stops of his own accord, and Sir Leicester, pulling off his hat, is still for a few moments before they ride away.

War rages yet with the audacious Boythorn, though at uncertain intervals, and now hotly, and now coolly; flickering like an unsteady fire. The truth is said to be, that when Sir Leicester came down to Lincolnshire for good, Mr. Boythorn showed a manifest desire to abandon his right of way, and do whatever Sir Leicester would: which Sir Leicester, conceiving to be a condescension to his illness or misfortune, took in such high dudgeon, and was so magnificently aggrieved by, that Mr. Boythorn found himself under the necessity of committing a flagrant trespass to restore his neighbour to himself. Similarly Mr. Boythorn continues to post tremendous placards on the disputed thoroughfare, and (with his bird upon his head) to hold forth vehemently against Sir Leicester in the sanctuary of his own home; similarly, also, he defies him as of old in the little church, by testifying a bland unconsciousness of his existence. But it is whispered that when he is most ferocious towards his old foe, he is really most considerate; and that Sir Leicester, in the dignity of being implacable, little supposes how much he is humoured. As little does he think how near together he and his antagonist have suffered, in the fortunes of two sisters; and his antagonist, who knows it now, is not the man to tell him. So the quarrel goes on to the satisfaction of both.

In one of the lodges of the park; that lodge within sight of the house where, once upon a time, when the waters were out down in Lincolnshire, my Lady used to see the Keeper's child; the stalwart man, the trooper formerly, is housed. Some relics of his old calling hang upon the walls, and these it is the chosen recreation of a little lame man about the stable-yard to keep gleaming bright. A busy little man he always is, in the polishing at harness-house doors, of stirrup-irons, bits, curb-chains, harness bosses, anything in the way of a stable-yard that will take a polish: leading a life of friction. A shaggy little damaged man, withal, not unlike an old dog of some mongrel breed, who has been considerably knocked about. He answers to the name of Phil.

A goodly sight it is to see the grand old housekeeper (harder of hearing now) going to church on the arm of her son, and to observe—which few do, for the house is scant of company in these times—the relations of both towards Sir Leicester, and his towards them. They have visitors in the high summer weather, when a grey cloak and umbrella, unknown to Chesney Wold at other periods, are seen among the leaves; when two young ladies are occasionally found gambolling, in sequestered saw-pits and such nooks of the park; and when the smoke of two pipes wreathes away into the fragrant evening air, from the trooper's door. Then is a fife heard trolling within the lodge, on the inspiring topic of the British Grenadiers; and, as the evening closes in, a gruff inflexible voice is heard to say, while two men pace together up and down, "But I never own to it before the old girl. Discipline must be maintained."

The greater part of the house is shut up, and it is a show-house no longer; yet Sir Leicester holds his shrunken state in the long drawing-room for all that, and reposes in his old place before my Lady's picture. Closed in by night with broad screens, and illumined only in that part, the light of the drawing-room seems gradually contracting and dwindling until it shall be no more. A little more, in truth, and it will be all extinguished for Sir Leicester; and the damp door in the mausoleum which shuts so tight, and looks so obdurate, will have opened and relieved him.

Volumnia, growing with the flight of time pinker as to the red in her face, and yellower as to the white, reads to Sir Leicester in the long evenings, and is driven to various artifices to conceal her yawns: of which the chief and most efficacious is the insertion of the pearl necklace between her rosy lips. Long-winded treatises on the Buffy and Boodle question, showing how Buffy is immaculate and Boodle villainous, and how the country is lost by being all Boodle and no Buffy, or saved by being all Buffy and no Boodle (it must be one of the two, and cannot be anything else), are the staple of her reading. Sir Leicester is not particular what it is, and does not appear to follow it very closely; further than that he always comes broad awake the moment Volumnia ventures to leave off, and, sonorously repeating her last word, begs with some displeasure to know if she finds herself fatigued? However, Volumnia, in the course of her bird-like hopping about and pecking at papers, has alighted on a memorandum concerning herself, in the event of "anything happening" to her kinsman, which is handsome compensation for an extensive course of reading, and holds even the dragon Boredom at bay.

The cousins generally are rather shy of Chesney Wold in its dulness, but take to it a little in the shooting season, when guns are heard in the plantations, and a few scattered beaters and keepers wait at the old places of appointment, for low spirited twos and threes of cousins. The debilitated cousin, more debilitated by the dreariness of the place, gets into a fearful state of depression, groaning under penitential sofa-pillows in his gunless hours, and protesting that such fernal old jail 's—nough t'sew fler up—frever.

The only great occasions for Volumnia, in this changed aspect of the place in Lincolnshire, are those occasions, rare and widely-separated, when something is to be done for the county, or the country, in the way of gracing a public ball. Then, indeed, does the tuckered sylph come out in fairy form, and proceed with joy under cousinly escort to the exhausted old assembly-room, fourteen heavy miles off: which, during three hundred and sixty-four days and nights of every ordinary year, is a kind of Antipodean lumber-room, full of old chairs and tables, upside down. Then, indeed, does she captivate all hearts by her condescension, by her girlish vivacity, and by her skipping about as in the days when the hideous old general with the mouth too full of teeth, had not cut one of them at two guineas each. Then does she twirl and twine, a pastoral nymph of good family, through the mazes of the dance. Then do the swains appear with tea, with lemonade, with sandwiches, with homage. Then is she kind and cruel, stately and unassuming, various, beautifully wilful. Then is there a singular kind of parallel between her and the little glass chandeliers of another age, embellishing that assembly-room; which, with their meagre stems, their spare little drops, their disappointing knobs where no drops are, their bare little stalks from which knobs and drops have both departed, and their little feeble prismatic twinkling, all seem Volumnias.

For the rest, Lincolnshire life to Volumnia is a vast blank of overgrown house looking out upon trees, sighing, wringing their hands, bowing their heads, and casting their tears upon the window-panes in monotonous depression. A labyrinth of grandeur, less the property of an old family of human beings and their ghostly likenesses, than of an old family of echoings and thunderings which start out of their hundred graves at every sound, and go resounding through the building. A waste of unused passages and staircases, in which to drop a comb upon a bedroom floor at night is to send a stealthy footfall on an errand through the house. A place where few people care to go about alone; where a maid screams if an ash drops from the fire, takes to crying at all times and seasons, becomes the victim of a low disorder of the spirits, and gives warning and departs.

Thus Chesney Wold. With so much of itself abandoned to darkness and vacancy; with so little change under the summer shining or the wintry lowering; so sombre and motionless always—no flag flying now by day, no rows of lights sparkling by night; with no family to come and go, no visitors to be the souls of pale cold shapes of rooms, no stir of life about it;—passion and pride, even to the stranger's eye, have died away from the place in Lincolnshire, and yielded it to dull repose.

CHAPTER LXVII.

THE CLOSE OF ESTHER'S NARRATIVE.

Full seven happy years I have been the mistress of Bleak House. The few words that I have to add to what I have written, are soon penned; then I, and the unknown friend to whom I write, will part for ever. Not without much dear remembrance on my side. Not without some, I hope, on his or hers.

They gave my darling into my arms, and through many weeks I never left her. The little child who was to have done so much, was born before the turf was planted on its father's grave. It was a boy; and I, my husband, and my guardian, gave him his father's name.

The help that my dear counted on, did come to her; though it came, in the Eternal wisdom, for another purpose. Though to bless and restore his mother, not his father, was the errand of this baby, its power was mighty to do it. When I saw the strength of the weak little hand, and how its touch could heal my darling's heart, and raise up hope within her, I felt a new sense of the goodness and the tenderness of God.

They throve; and by degrees I saw my dear girl pass into my country garden, and walk there with her infant in her arms. I was married then. I was the happiest of the happy.

It was at this time that my guardian joined us, and asked Ada when she would come home?

"Both houses are your home, my dear," said he, "but the older Bleak House claims priority. When you and my boy are strong enough to do it, come and take possession of your home."

Ada called him "her dearest cousin, John." But he said, No, it must be guardian now. He was her guardian henceforth, and the boy's; and he had an old association with the name. So she called him guardian, and has called him guardian ever since. The children know him by no other name.—I say the children; I have two little daughters.

It is difficult to believe that Charley (round-eyed still, and not at all grammatical) is married to a miller in our neighbourhood; yet so it is; and even now, looking up from my desk as I write, early in the morning at my summer window, I see the very mill beginning to go round. I hope the miller will not spoil Charley; but he is very fond of her, and Charley is rather vain of such a match—for he is well to do, and was in great request. So far as my small maid is concerned, I might suppose Time to have stood for seven years as still as the mill did half an hour ago; since little Emma, Charley's sister, is exactly what Charley used to be. As for Tom, Charley's brother, I am vexed to say what he did at school to

cyphering, but I think it was Decimals. He is apprenticed to the miller, whatever it was; and is a good bashful fellow, always falling in love with somebody, and being ashamed of it.

Caddy Jellyby passed her very last holidays with us, and was a dearer creature than ever; perpetually dancing in and out of the house with the children, as if she had never given a dancing-lesson in her life. Caddy keeps her own little carriage now, instead of hiring one, and lives full two miles further westward than Newman Street. She works very hard, her husband (an excellent one) being lame, and able to do very little. Still, she is more than contented, and does all she has to do with all her heart. Mr. Jellyby spends his evenings at her new house with his head against the wall, as he used to do in her old one. I have heard that Mrs. Jellyby was understood to suffer great mortification, from her daughter's ignoble marriage and pursuits; but I hope she got over it in time. She has been disappointed in Borrioboola-Gha, which turned out a failure in consequence of the King of Borrioboola wanting to sell everybody—who survived the climate—for Rum; but she has taken up with the rights of women to sit in Parliament, and Caddy tells me it is a mission involving more correspondence than the old one. I had almost forgotten Caddy's poor little girl. She is not such a mite now; but she is deaf and dumb. I believe there never was a better mother than Caddy, who learns, in her scanty intervals of leisure, innumerable deaf and dumb arts, to soften the affliction of her child.

As if I were never to have done with Caddy, I am reminded here of Peepy and old Mr. Turveydrop. Peepy is in the Custom House, and doing extremely well. Old Mr. Turveydrop, very apoplectic, still exhibits his Deportment about town; still enjoys himself in the old manner; is still believed in, in the old way. He is constant in his patronage of Peepy, and is understood to have bequeathed him a favourite French clock in his dressing-room—which is not his property.

With the first money we saved at home, we added to our pretty house by throwing out a little Growlery expressly for my guardian; which we inaugurated with great splendour the next time he came down to see us. I try to write all this lightly, because my heart is full in drawing to an end; but when I write of him, my tears will have their way.

I never look at him, but I hear our poor dear Richard calling him a good man. To Ada and her pretty boy, he is the fondest father; to me, he is what he has ever been, and what name can I give to that? He is my husband's best and dearest friend, he is our children's darling, he is the object of our deepest love and veneration. Yet while I feel towards him as if he were a superior being, I am so familiar with him, and so easy with him, that I almost wonder at myself. I have never lost my old names, nor has he lost his; nor do I ever, when he is with us, sit in any other place than in my old chair at his side. Dame Trot, Dame Durden, Little Woman!—all just the same as ever; and I answer, Yes, dear Guardian! just the same.

I have never known the wind to be in the East for a single moment, since the day when he took me to the porch to read the name. I remarked to him once, that the wind seemed never in the East now: and he said, No, truly; it had finally departed from that quarter on that very day.

I think my darling girl is more beautiful than ever. The sorrow that has been in her face—for it is not there now—seems to have purified even its innocent expression, and to have given it a diviner quality. Sometimes, when I raise my eyes and see her, in the black dress that she still wears, teaching my Richard, I feel—it is difficult to express—as if it were so good to know that she remembers her dear Esther in her prayers.

I call him my Richard! But he says that he has two mamas, and I am one.

We are not rich in the least, but we have always prospered, and we have quite enough. I never walk out with my husband, but I hear the people bless him. I never go into a house of any degree, but I hear his praises, or see them in grateful eyes. I never lie down at night, but I know that in the course of that day he has alleviated pain, and soothed some fellow-creature in the time of need. I know that from the beds of those who were past recovery, thanks have often, often gone up, in the last hours, for his patient ministration. Is not this to be rich?

The people even praise Me to the doctor's wife. The people even like Me as I go about, and make so much of me that I am quite abashed. I owe it all to him, my love, my pride! They like me for his sake, as I do everything I do in life for his sake.

A night or two ago, after bustling about preparing for my darling and my guardian and little Richard, who are coming to-morrow, I was sitting out in the porch of all places, that dearly memorable porch, where Allan came home. So he said. "My gracious little woman, what are you doing here?" And I said, "The moonlight shining so brightly, Allan, and the night is so delicious, that I have been sitting here, thinking."

"What have you been thinking about, my dear?" said Allan then.

"How curious you are!" said I. "I am almost ashamed to tell you, but I will. I have been thinking about my old looks—such as they were."

"And what have you been thinking about them, my busy bee?" said Allan.

"I have been thinking, that I thought it was impossible that you *could* have loved me any better, even if I had retained them."

"—Such as they were?" said Allan, laughing.

"Such as they were, of course."

"My dear Dame Durden," said Allan, drawing my arm through his, "do you ever look in the glass?"

"You know I do; you see me do it."

"And don't you know that you are prettier than you ever were?"

I did not know that; I am not certain that I know it now. But I know that my dearest little pets are very pretty, and that my darling is very beautiful, and that my husband is very handsome, and that my guardian has the brightest and most benevolent face that ever was seen; and that they can very well do without much beauty in me—even supposing——.

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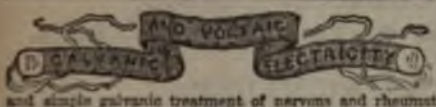

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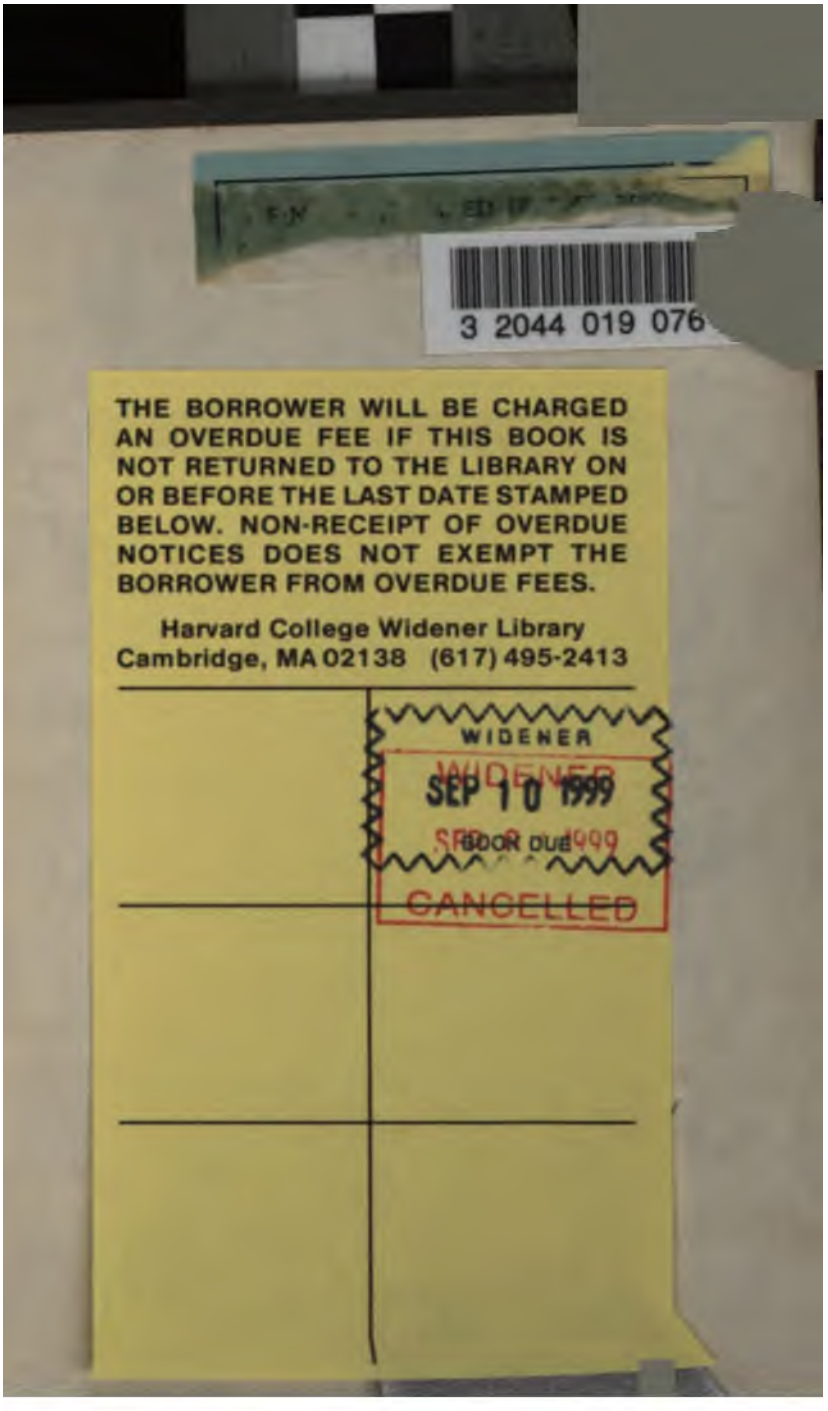
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